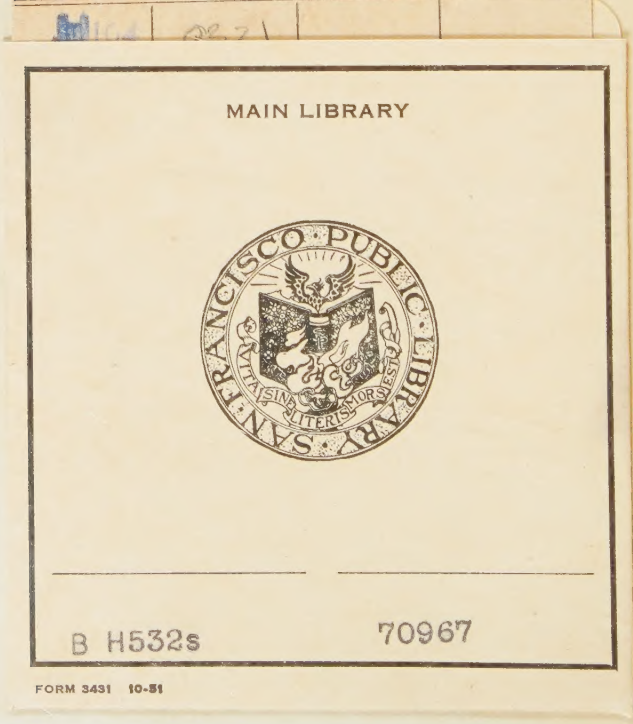
PUBLIC
S.F.
LIBRARY

B H532s

Siguenza

Life of Saint Jerome

70967



SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00355 9128

DATE DUE

SFPL	FEB 20 '81		
SFPL	MAR 14 '81		
SFPL	APR 11 '81		
SFPL	FEB 26 '87		
SFPL	NOV 21 '88		
MAR - 6 1995			

DEMCO 38-297

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-BFN-696

EL GRAN PADRE Sn GERÓNIMO

DOCTOR MÁXIMO DE LA IGLESIA

THE LIFE

OF

SAINT JEROME

THE GREAT DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

IN SIX BOOKS

FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH OF

THE REVEREND FATHER FRAY JOSÉ DE SIGÜENZA

PROFESSED MONK OF THE ROYAL MONASTERY OF SAN LORENZO, MADRID

1595

BY

MARIANA MONTEIRO

'Those who come to see the wonder of the world (the Escorial), do not behold the principal wonder it contains if they do not see Father José de Sigüenza; for, in view of his merits, I say that his fame will last longer than the building, despite that it has every mark and characteristic of solidity and durability.'—*Words of Philip II. of Spain.*

PUBLIC LIBRARY

LONDON: SANDS AND CO

1907

3 1223 00355 9128

B
H532s

70967

S. F. PUBLIC LIBRARY

TO

SAINT TERESA OF JESUS

THE LEARNED AMONG WOMEN,

'TEACHER OF HEAVENLY DOCTRINE'

THE PEERLESS PEARL OF AVILA

THE GLORY OF THE SPANISH NATION,

WHOSE HEART WAS RIVEN BY THE DART OF LOVE DIVINE!

THIS WORK

IS LOVINGLY CONSECRATED AND DEDICATED,

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE MANY GRACES AND FAVOURS

OBTAINED THROUGH THE SAINT'S INTERCESSION,

BY HER GRATEFUL COMPATRIOT

MARIANA DE NAUTET MONTEIRO

'They that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.'—DANIEL xii.

ENCOMIUM

ON OUR HOLY FATHER ST. JEROME

The Courteous Solitary,
The Silent Statesman,
The Eloquent without Voice,
The Orator without a Senate:
The Demosthenes of the Desert,
The great Christian Cicero,
A Plato without Republic,
The Sage without an Athens:

Is it then a miracle
That he should teach, write, conquer,
And pray so much?

The Master without Schools,
The Preceptor without Salary,
The Oracle without a Delphos,
The Apollo ever consulted:
The Interpreter of the King,
The Cloistered Senator,
The Applause of the *Cortes*,
The Silence of the Cloisters:

Is it then a miracle
That he should teach, write, conquer,
And pray so much?

The Aaron to a Moses,
The Spirit of Paul,
The faithful Tertullian,
The expurgated Origen:

The *Trilinguist* of the College,
Of Doctors the Fourth,
Without Consistory the Red Hat,
A Solomon ever sought after:

Is it then a miracle
That he should teach, write, conquer,
And pray so much?

The Greek passed on to Rome,
The Roman of Palestine,
The Dweller in Syria,
The Hermit of Stridon:
The Man of bravest worth
The Dalmatians ever had,
The Pen of finest point
Past ages had beheld:

Is it then a miracle
That he should teach, write, conquer,
And pray so much?

The Grand Chancellor of the Kingdom,
The Reformer of States,
The Senior in a full Cloister,
The President of the Courts:
The Ruler in disputes,—
The Censor of the Sacred Palace!
He who by dying honoured Honorius,
He who by his birth honoured Constantius:

Is it then a miracle
That he should teach, write, conquer,
And pray so much?

The sharp sword of the Heretics,
The hard Iron of the Arians;
Profound knowledge, which engulphed
A sea of Pelagians:
The Sentinel against Vigilantius,
The Light against the Luciferians,
The Advocate of Mary
Against Helvidius and his insults:

Is it then a miracle
That he should teach, write, conquer,
And pray so much?

The Homer of Paula,
Of Infantas the Tutor,
The first among Youths,
The last of the Ancients:
A David in his Bethlehem,
Behind the Star the Wise man,
The Ox at the Crib, ruminating,—
The gentle Ass tethered to the Stall!

Is it then a miracle
That he should teach, write, conquer,
And pray so much?

PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATION

The venerable monks of the Order of St. Jerome in Madrid in 1853, desirous of preserving this valuable work on the Life of St. Jerome, written by a monk universally considered as one of the most brilliant classical writers of Spain, both for purity of style and grandeur of diction, decided upon publishing a new edition.

The work is divided into Six Books, comprising the *Seven Ages of Man.* The original was published in 1595, and formed a work of some 580 pages of about 400 words. The new edition, of which the present issue is a translation, was brought out with two short discourses by Fray Juan Gonzalez on the learned author, an epitome of which I proceed to give in English, in order to afford the reader some idea of the Spanish writer of the renowned *Life of Saint Jerome.*

"At the middle of the sixteenth century, at the period when in Spain *Belles-Lettres* were as advanced as the profession of arms, and when both the study of letters and the profession of arms were as much attended to as religion itself, there was born in the city of Sigüenza the venerable and renowned historian who contributed to the Jeromite Order so much glory, and to letters so great an advancement. From his earliest years this classical writer manifested a great love of study, and the progress he made in the years of his childhood and youth, was so marked

that all who knew him felt convinced that he would some day prove to be no ordinary man, since he was becoming so distinguished at the very commencement of life. The religious orders, with their glorious traditions, scientific and literary, afforded a beneficent asylum to science, as well as to virtue, and in the solitude of their cloisters, saints and sages grew up together and flourished. In those days the religious of St. Jerome were much esteemed, and protected by the Spanish monarchs, and it was into this Order that our student of Sigüenza sought to enter and obtained admission, where he soon surpassed his companions in learning and talent.

After repeated entreaties, he received the holy habit in the celebrated monastery *del Parral de Segovia*, in which the uncle of our novice was one of the community. To be able to state how the monks watched his progress in the strict observance of the rule, and his growth in virtue, would be a sufficient matter for a whole treatise. The holy monks, who considered that Father Joseph of Sigüenza was destined for great things, sent him to the Royal College of San Lorenzo to complete his studies, where, later on, he became one of the first religious when, in 1575, the monks were translated from Parral to the sumptuous monastery that Philip II. bequeathed to future generations. Here, first as a disciple, and subsequently as master, he acquired great renown for his piety and assiduity in study, so much so, that he acquired a great influence among his companions, and an authority which was acknowledged even by that great king, who ever listened to him with deepest respect.

And as it is written, "he who humbleth himself shall be exalted," the more Father Sigüenza sought to conceal himself in this retreat, with no other solace but his books, all the more did the monasteries of his Order exert all their

powers to induce him to accept the prelacy, of which he had a great dread. But it could not be allowed that Father Sigüenza should remain in humble obscurity. It had seemed to the wise monk, that, by entering the royal monastery of San Lorenzo, where, by the founder's intention, the monks were not to leave that house for another of their Order, he would be left in undisturbed peace, so he resolved to profess a second time, and thus be free from any acceptance of higher charges. At that time there dwelt in San Lorenzo the illustrious Arias Montana, and our virtuous monk became his disciple. So rapidly, under this wise master, did Father Sigüenza advance in the knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages, and, in the science of the sacred Scriptures, that one of the glories of this master, was the honour of having left such a disciple as his successor.

The historical and learned subjects executed on the domes and walls of the magnificent library of San Lorenzo by the excellent Italian artist Peregin de Peregrini, were chosen by Sigüenza, who had succeeded the erudite Arias Montana in the office of chief librarian.

Philip II. was wont to say: "*Those who come to see this wonder of the world, do not see the principal wonder it contains if they do not see Father José de Sigüenza; for, in view of his merits, I say that his fame will last longer than the building, despite that it has every mark and characteristic of solidity and durability.*" On another occasion, when the ministers who surrounded the king were discussing the learning of Sigüenza, qualifying him virtuous, saintly, and learned, Philip II. turned to them and said, "*Why fatigue yourselves recounting what he is and what he knows? Better state what José de Sigüenza does* NOT *know, and you will end the discussion sooner.*"

Inflexible towards himself, charitable and indulgent

to others, most tenderly loving towards God, in study untiring, ever foremost in the religious observance of humility and all other Christian virtues, a true model of the religious life, Father José de Sigüenza was justly renowned in life, and died the death of a saintly man on the 22nd of May 1606. His memory is deeply respected in the holy Order wherein he professed, and of his virtues the loftiest idea is preserved."

"The chief works he bequeathed to us by his profound learning were the history, or life, which is the subject of this book, and two parts of the history of his Order."

"Father José of Sigüenza is rightly considered to be one of the first Castilian classical writers, and under his brilliant pen the rich, harmonious language of Castile has lent itself grandly to develop the ideas of the illustrious sage."

This history, or life of St. Jerome, is a masterpiece in more senses than one; and in our epoch, when every one writes, and the greater number do so in a flippant manner, it appears to me, that the Jeromite Fathers have rendered a signal service to science and letters, to reprint his grand work at their expense; a work which has long been sought after by all erudite men who love the literature of Spain. It is this work which I have translated, that my humble efforts may make it known to the English-speaking races, who appreciate all that is grand and noble, and true of all nations, and even give them an honoured place in their libraries.

MARIANA MONTEIRO.

St. Scholastica's Retreat,
Clapton, N.E., 1907.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

He who follows with attention the course of events since the commencement of the world until the present time, will clearly discern the care and providence with which Heaven has always come forward to remedy the needs of men. The eyes of God are far-seeing, without limit of place or time, and He foresees all the events and occurrences which are to take place in this world of ours, and which succeed one another.

From this proceeds that He equally calls by their name, and is replied to, by all things which are, and by those which are not. He sees all things, penetrates every secret, foresees and disposes all human events with such harmony, that each fulfils its place in the beauteous scheme of creation, yet does not exceed its appointed and just meed and term. This is so clearly manifested in the order of nature that it is apparent to the simplest mind; while in the order of the supernatural, and in the demands of the free will of human beings, this divine truth shines forth still more resplendently.

The wisdom of God saw that the malice and envy of the devil would have no end, and his pride would not be diminished a single point, rather that it would continue to increase in an equal degree with the progress of the ages, striving throughout all time to take from

God that glory which is His due, and deprive man of the heavenly riches that are promised him. Therefore God designed to provide a remedy against the malice and the ravages caused by the envy and wickedness of the Evil One.

In the days when the Chaldeans strove to persuade the world that all things were dependent on the course of the stars, and that they were the primary and true cause of human events, a deceit wherewith the enemy beguiled men through their understanding, God raised up the patriarch Abraham, who delivered them from their blindness and superstition, instructed them in right principles, thus bequeathing to the world an admirable model of true philosophy, of holy faith and divine obedience, and who made the light of God's truth to shine upon those souls who had been blinded by the false doctrine of their teachers. At a later period, the Egyptians, deluded by the craft of this same enemy, fell into superstition and witchcrafts, and the devil (the better to deceive them) enveloped them under the appearances of things secret and divine. To remedy this evil, God provided a Moses, who, after obtaining from their science all that was needed of information, openly manifested to them upon what vain foundations they had erected all their beliefs; and that, excepting those things which, through His divine mercy, were communicated in the supernatural order to men, all else was illusion and phantasy, or what was only of the earth, earthly.

When the people of Israel were in such a state of transgression and wickedness that, forgetful of the holy Law which they had received of God through the hands of His holy angels, they fell into a miserable idolatry, God raised up a Samuel who corrected them, and kept

them faithful to the ancient and good customs of their forefathers; quelled the disorder which reigned amongst the people, and established order and government under the rule of one supreme head, their king. Some, alas, indeed many of their kings, in order to follow their pleasures and interests, contemned the holy laws and ceremonies which had been given them from heaven, and fell, dragging with them the greater number of the people who were inclined to follow the example of their prince into the former idolatry, and with it into every species of vice imaginable. To rectify so great an abuse, it was needed that God should provide for them, as He usually does, a remedy, and this in the person of an Elias, whose strength of virtue should be commensurate with the wickedness of the king and people! And Elias was a man who in his life, words, work, and zeal, was such a contrast to all that was the usage in Israel, that it was clearly manifest that he had been raised by God Himself, in order to be the general remedy for so many evils.

The chosen people were no less in an extreme state of misery when the intruder Herod reigned, nor were the vices of avarice, ambition, hypocrisy, usury, simony, and homicide less predominant when God raised a new and no less zealous Elias. To raise is called in the holy Scriptures the provision which God makes of these holy ministers, both because (comparatively speaking) all other men are, as it were, fallen, and overthrown in their sins, as because these chosen men of God rise up, and are standing erect, courageous, and ready to obey whatever God should command them. The man whom God raised up at this era was John the Baptist, by whom He not only remedied the tide of so many evils and false doctrines, but further-

more preordained that he should be the precursor of the Messiah, or the harbinger of the Morning Star, of the new Sun and Light which was about to come into the world. This light declared by the same Sun Jesus Christ, and the seed of the regeneration of the kingdom and freedom of mankind, together with the proclamation of the Apostles made manifest and planted, watered and made fruitful by the blood of the martyrs, seemed, and it was so, as though the world had been created anew, and stripped of the old coil of the ancient serpent, and had taken a new lustre of holiness of life and heavenly customs, and that at His coming the wild beasts, which under the covert of former shadows had taken so many victims in the world, now withdrew, dazed and terrified, to the caves out of which they had sallied forth.

The devil could not brook seeing himself thus foiled and dethroned on all sides, and man restored to so much blessedness; and although he could not deny to God the glory of the victory, nevertheless he endeavoured to place hindrances to its bringing forth fruit. He gathered together all his forces, and sharpening more than ever the subtlety of his malice; he opened wide the door of the abyss to all the evils which could come out of it, and thus armed anew for the combat of souls, he determined all together, as in a closed squadron, to assail yet more the Church of Jesus Christ!

The devil then found the means by which the blood of the martyrs, which had scarcely been wiped away, should again become freshened by the apostasy of Julian Augustus, the various other persecutions, and heresies of that period, and which through the ambition of men to increase in the breasts of men to such a degree that it would end in open disobedience to the Church.

He spread sleep over the eyes of the shepherds and their flocks, and while men slumbered he sowed cockle of errors and heresies, evil doctrines, vain studies and pernicious customs, aliens all to the evangelical sincerity; thus he brought into the world a great number of heresiarchs, each of whom advanced some new error which wearied generally Christianity. He also awakened in the hearts of those who remained faithful within the Church, pride, covetousness, the desire of riches and of fame, of dignities, honours, glory, and pleasures! Finally he left no stone upon stone in his efforts to ruin the peace and liberty of the House of the Lord itself, and to destroy the tranquillity enjoyed by His servants, and those the Church had adopted as her children in the teaching and doctrine of the Gospel, so that these should doubt the stability of her powers. But God did not forget His accustomed mercy—He Who now looks upon us not only as the God and Master of all things, but also as a Father and Brother; therefore our Divine Lord sent to countervail the fury of so many evils of those times illustrious and noble men full of sanctity and doctrine, to withstand, like the bulwarks of a fortified city, the attacks of the invading hosts, and to apply efficacious remedies to the snares of the wicked foe, and oppose so many calamities. Of the number of these great men, like a morning star shining brilliantly among the constellations and like a sun outshining the stars themselves, came forth resplendently our great and saintly Jerome, Doctor, whom God seemed to have raised up endowed with all that could be desired of medicine and remedy, to clear away what the devil in so many ages had attempted to spread little by little, and the evils which he had seemingly planted.

It is the life of this great man that I purpose to write in the Castilian language in a more lengthy manner than has ever been written before, either in Spanish or in Latin—a task of great difficulty, by reason of its historic value, and on account of the subject-matter, varied and grave, an honourable undertaking, yet difficult of issue. Few have hitherto grasped the history of it; saints' lives many indeed have undertaken to write; whether these have carried forward their intent successfully, it is difficult to judge, unless by admitting new laws unknown to the ancients. In regard to the Castilian language, if it is used simply it is condemned; if written with care it appears affected—a tongue little used, cultivated by the few; whilst those who think they know it, also think that in order to speak it well, it should be made up of new vocabularies which were not known to our forefathers. The subject-matter, grave and lofty, teems with singular contrarieties, which we find difficult to compare with other saints. At one point we find a vivid faith most constant in times of deadly depression and indecision, an extreme obedience to Pope and Church, a thing, indeed, for all times, but in these, of greatest importance. Various peregrinations, temptations of the devils, miraculous punishments, and trials made by God in His saint; a great renunciation of country, of parents, brethren, friends, and allies, with an utter forgetfulness and denial in its highest degree of the things of life, like to a new sampler of Abraham. Further on we find him, the master of a great variety of tongues, endowed with the knowledge of rare languages; not only Greek and Hebrew, but even Chaldaic, Arabic, Syrian, and other dialects—a thing in those days, and also in ours, possessed by the few, despised by some, held in

suspicion by others; so greatly can ignorance work, even when levelled against persons held in authority by the world, which dares to blaspheme what it is ignorant of. Interpretations of Holy Writ, various versions, questions oftentimes disputed and not duly investigated on account of their difficulty and of the many opinions, affairs in which the many either speak obscurely or through the mouths of others who are but little better informed than themselves. Descriptions of countries, more particularly of the Holy Land, difficult to portray owing to the distance, and by reason of the changes effected by the times, the peoples, places, and names.

Yet, that not all be good (although all is good to the good), we shall witness evil, mean behaviours, and great ingratitude against the saint, false testimonies, malice, lies, wrongs done him by friends and enemies—all this to need almost the description of a Moses and his life to portray our saint, a thing as it were impossible were it not that the veil has been already removed; the establishment and the order of the services of the Church and divine worship; the singing of the Psalms, as well as other embellishments and greater lustre of the holy ceremonies; his assistance in the business of the Pope, and replies to the causes of faith, and determinations of the Councils—affairs all of them of great difficulty and obscurity, wherein is barely found the way to trace the lines of demarcation. Furthermore, to trace out and show the sincerity and truth with which so many things were handled by one man only; the small interest which the saint experienced from men; the ingratitude of those who profited by his labours, all this manifests from head to foot a Samuel who himself went through all this at the hands of the city and people, not more ungrateful

towards him than ungrateful Rome behaved towards Jerome. Likewise must be stated and shown a free heart full of evangelical fortitude, established on the security of his own conscience, who looked not to the lineage of persons, their state, their office, their vices; who prescribed rules, who administered reprehensions, who gave counsels to such a variety of persons, priests and monks, bishops and knights, maidens, widows, religious women and children, married persons, fathers and mothers, masters and servants; who greatly loved the little ones if they were saintly; who humbled the pride of the great ones of the earth if they were evil; and who ever desired to exercise the humblest offices; large-hearted to reject what the world so unreasoningly calls greatness—all this is no less than to manifest the lives of an Elias and St. John newly returned to the world!

And yet more than this, we shall see, as it behoves to state, the rigors of so much penance, the wearing of a hairshirt, the enduring of chains, nakedness, hunger, strikings of the breast, long and weary illnesses, fastings almost unprecedented, journeyings into deserts, the companionship of wild beasts, the terrible temptations of the devils, and the still greater persecutions by heretics, prolonged prayers, revelations, raptures, ecstasies, and extraordinary excesses of the soul, discomforts of the body, weariness of spirit, untold labours, profound studies, abstruse writings by new and unexplored yet true paths—all this presupposes almost an impossible existence, and as it were little less than a miracle to succeed in so many details. Yet it is, however, a great assistance, and of much encouragement to us, that (independently of the reason and foundation of obedience, which can do much —indeed, all it dares) our saint on several well-nigh

imperative occasions wrote down many of his acts, and that in his descriptions he was as scrupulous in their statements as he had been in fulfilling them. We might well say of him that which was said of Cæsar when writing the commentary of his deeds, that he had done so only to leave matter for writers; yet he took the matter off their hands, because no one could recount the deeds better than himself. This applies to Jerome more appropriately, because, although as regards purity of language few equalled Cæsar, yet as to the fidelity of his statements he bears no comparison with Jerome. Hence the principal part of this history will be his own descriptions, rendered with fidelity, in accordance with the best admitted rules of translation, assisted also by reliable authors, taking small heed of others, that, at the price of being considered astute, gave way to malice and impiety, desirous of taking away on many occasions a large portion of the glory from that great Father whom the Holy Church with loud public voice willed to style great amid the doctors; because if Rome had her Fabiis and Valeriis, Greece her Alexander, France her Charles, on whom was bestowed the surname of 'Great' by reason of achievements by pen or sword, with far greater motive and reason does the Church bestow the appellation on her Jerome for his thousand victories gained over heretics, and as many more won by the grandeur of his pen.

The order of procedure followed in writing this Life will be the same as the saint followed; for since God bestowed on him such length of days that he passed through all the ages and periods which divide the life of man, we shall divide the history into the *Seven Ages of Man*, because God willed that his long life should give us to understand the great importance his life would be to the world. The narrative will be in six books, the better

to distinguish the various stages, because the small patience of readers of the present day does not admit of that continuity which the ancients so loved.

Should the judgment of such as know what writing history is, be offended at the many digressions, I think they will also perceive, that they are not made without a purpose, and that it is the life of a saint wherein of the three component parts which the historian is bound to follow, the principal one must needs be erudition and economy, and the inculcation of good customs. The two first ages will form the first book, since the subject-matter is so short; and each book will be divided into discourses, as the title of the work leaves me exonerated from following the precise laws of history.

CONTENTS

BOOK THE FIRST

FIRST AND SECOND AGES—INFANCY AND PUBERTY

PAGE

PROEM 3

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

ON THE BIRTHPLACE, PARENTAGE, AND NAME OF ST. JEROME . 10

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

THE PARENTS OF ST. JEROME SEND HIM TO ROME TO PURSUE HIS STUDIES—WHAT THESE STUDIES WERE, AND WHAT THE SAINT DID 23

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

THE BAPTISM OF ST. JEROME IN ROME—THE REASON WHY BAPTISM WAS DEFERRED 39

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

ON THE PURITY AND THE VIRGINITY WHICH ST. JEROME PRESERVED DURING HIS LIFE 53

BOOK THE SECOND

THIRD AGE—ADOLESCENCE

PAGE

PROEM 73

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

AFTER ST. JEROME HAD RECEIVED THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM HE DEPARTED TO FRANCE, TO VISIT THE LEARNED MEN THERE AND TO PROSECUTE HIS STUDIES—HE ENTERS A DESERT WITH BONOSUS 78

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

ST. JEROME RETURNS FROM FRANCE—HE SEEKS ENTRANCE INTO A PROFESSION—HERE IS DECLARED WHAT IT IS TO ENTER INTO THE PROFESSION OF THE CHURCH; AND WHAT WAS THE MONASTIC STATE IN FORMER TIMES 93

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

ST. JEROME DECLARES TO HIS PARENTS AND FRIENDS HIS RESOLUTION OF BECOMING A MONK—HERE IS STATED THE PLACE SELECTED FOR CARRYING OUT HIS PURPOSE . . 114

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

ON THE FIRST JOURNEY WHICH ST. JEROME UNDERTOOK TO THE HOLY LAND—THE VARIOUS PLACES HE VISITED PREVIOUS TO ENTERING THE DESERT 130

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

ST. JEROME GOES TO DWELL IN THE DESERT—WHAT MANNER OF LIFE HE LED THERE—THE GREAT PENANCES HE PERFORMED 143

BOOK THE THIRD

FOURTH AGE—YOUTH

PAGE

PROEM 163

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

ST. JEROME COMMENCES IN THE DESERT THE STUDY OF HEBREW 166

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

ST. JEROME SUFFERS MANY TEMPTATIONS IN THE DESERT---HE IS PUNISHED BY GOD IN AN EXTRAORDINARY VISION . . 177

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

SATAN PERSECUTES ST. JEROME IN THE DESERT BY MEANS OF HERETICS UNTIL HE FORCES HIM TO QUIT IT . . 190

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

ST. JEROME DWELLS IN ANTIOCH—IS ORDAINED PRIEST BY THE PATRIARCH PAULINUS — BECOMES A DISCIPLE OF APOLLINARIS — PROCEEDS TO CONSTANTINOPLE TO STUDY UNDER ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN—ST. JEROME RETURNS TO PALESTINE—HE CORRESPONDS WITH ST. DAMASUS . . . 207

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

ST. JEROME RETURNS TO ROME; ASSISTS POPE DAMASUS IN ALL AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH 224

DISCOURSE THE SIXTH

ST. JEROME A CARDINAL—THE ANTIQUITY OF THIS DIGNITY IS PROVED—HEREIN IS DECLARED THE NAME AND OFFICE . 239

BOOK THE FOURTH

FIFTH AGE—MANHOOD, VIRILITY

PAGE

PROEM 255

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

ST. JEROME ESTABLISHES THE ORDER OF THE DIVINE WORSHIP IN ROME, AND DRAWS UP THE HOLY CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH—HE PRESCRIBES THE *ALLELUIA* TO BE SUNG IN THE ROMAN LITURGY 259

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

ST. JEROME PRESCRIBES THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH, THE FORMULARY OF THE PRAYERS, AND THE RITE OF HOLY MASS 271

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

ST. JEROME TRANSLATES THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AT THE PETITION OF ST. DAMASUS, WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PSALMS—THE TRANSLATION OF THE SEPTUAGINT IS HERE CONSIDERED 292

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

MOTIVES WHICH URGED ST. JEROME TO UNDERTAKE THE TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES INTO LATIN FROM THE HEBREW TEXT—THE TRUTH AND FULNESS OF THE TEXT—PROOFS ARE BROUGHT FORWARD THAT THE VULGATE TRANSLATION IS ST. JEROME'S 322

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

ST. JEROME TRANSLATES THE SACRED SCRIPTURES INTO SLAVONIC —HE ARRANGES THE DIVINE OFFICE 336

DISCOURSE THE SIXTH

PAGE

The Life led by St. Jerome in Rome—The Exercises he practised — What Effects his Words and Example produced 346

DISCOURSE THE SEVENTH

Continuation of the Life and Labours of St. Jerome in Rome —Information is afforded respecting some Works he composed 363

DISCOURSE THE EIGHTH

St. Jerome is persecuted in Rome—False Testimonies raised against him—Quits Rome for the Holy Land . . 374

DISCOURSE THE NINTH

The Journey of St. Jerome from Rome to the Holy Land . 388

DISCOURSE THE TENTH

St. Jerome goes from Jerusalem to Egypt—Proceeds to the Deserts of Nitria—Visits the holy Monks dwelling there—Paula arrives at Bethlehem . . . 399

DISCOURSE THE ELEVENTH

St. Paula builds four Monasteries in Bethlehem and St. Jerome one—He washes the Feet of the Pilgrims . 408

DISCOURSE THE TWELFTH

What St. Jerome effected during the First Years of his Residence in Bethlehem 418

BOOK THE FIFTH

SIXTH AGE—SENESCENCE

PAGE

PROEM 427

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

ST. JEROME QUITS BETHLEHEM FOR ALEXANDRIA TO CONVERSE WITH DIDYMUS 431

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

ST. JEROME SEEKS A HEBREW PRECEPTOR IN ORDER TO PERFECT HIMSELF IN THE LANGUAGE 437

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

ON SOME OF THE PIOUS LABOURS WHICH ST. JEROME UNDERTOOK FROM THE HEBREW TO ENRICH THE CHURCH . . 445

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

ST. JEROME DILIGENTLY VISITS THE WHOLE OF THE HOLY LAND WITH THE OBJECT OF UNDERSTANDING THE CHRONICLES, AND THE OTHER BOOKS OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES . . 453

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

ST. JEROME COMPOSED A MARTYROLOGY — THE REASON FOR WRITING MARTYROLOGIES IN THE CHURCH . . . 459

DISCOURSE THE SIXTH

OF THE MANY TREATISES AND EPISTLES WHICH ST. JEROME WROTE AT THE PETITION OF VARIOUS PERSONS WHILST IN BETHLEHEM 470

DISCOURSE THE SEVENTH

PAGE

THE NARRATIVE IS CONTINUED OF THE LITERARY DOCUMENTS LEFT BY ST. JEROME IN THE CHURCH; MADE CHIEFLY AT THE PETITION OF PIOUS PERSONS 489

DISCOURSE THE EIGHTH

ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ST. JEROME WITH A LION IN THE BETHLEHEM MONASTERY—ORDINATION OF HIS BROTHER PAULINUS—DISPUTES THAT ARISE BETWEEN ST. JEROME AND JOHN OF JERUSALEM 510

DISCOURSE THE NINTH

DISPUTES ARISE BETWEEN OUR HOLY DOCTOR, ST. JEROME, AND RUFINUS—CAUSES OF THE SAME 535

DISCOURSE THE TENTH

DEATH OF THE SAINTLY MATRON PAULA 557

DISCOURSE THE ELEVENTH

SERIOUS BUT PIOUS CONTROVERSIES ARISE BETWEEN ST. JEROME AND ST. AUGUSTINE—THE END OF THESE CONTENTIONS . 571

BOOK THE SIXTH

SEVENTH AGE—DECREPITUDE

PROEM 603

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

ST. JEROME WRITES COMMENTARIES ON THE PROPHETS DANIEL AND ISAIAH—HE IS STRICKEN BY A SEVERE ILLNESS . 609

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

PAGE

By reason of the entry of Alaric into Rome, many Romans resorted to St. Jerome at Bethlehem—He writes the Commentaries on Ezechiel and Jeremias—He also writes other Works—Death of the holy Virgin Eustochium . 623

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

The Passing Away and Death of the glorious Doctor, St. Jerome 646

BOOK THE FIRST

FIRST AND SECOND AGES—INFANCY AND PUBERTY

PROEM

Some of the greatest philosophers have divided the course of human life into ten septenaries, or weeks of years, as appears by some verses of Solon the Athenian, which are well known. Nevertheless, the distinction made by Hippocrates, the prince of good philosophy and of medicine, has been more generally received, which divides the whole period of man's life into seven ages. By this division the first age is called infancy, in which the child, not as yet possessing any teeth, is unable to articulate words, from which fact it is called an *infant*. This period lasts till its seventh year of age. The second period extends over another seven years, that is to say, until the child reaches the age of fourteen, when he attains the age of puberty. Then follows adolescence, which continues up to twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, at which period the beard begins to grow and other signs of manhood show themselves. The fourth period includes youth, which lasts up to thirty, when the powers and strength of the body have become perfected, the man having attained his full number and height. The fifth is called manhood, and then he is in full possession of his manliness; and it may be said of this period that nature, so far as the body is concerned, is stationary in her work, having attained the zenith of human life; and this condition lasts until his forty-ninth year. Then speedily follows senescence, that

time of life in which the bloom of youth commences to decline, and manly beauty to fade, whose limits are so short that it only extends to the fifty-sixth year. From that time forward, according to the common opinion, the term is *old age*, or decrepitude, without assigning any further limit or period, as St. Augustine says,[1] who, comparing the ages of man with those of the world, affirms that senescence lasts as long as all the other six periods together, because, commencing at latest from the sixtieth year, it may be prolonged even to the hundredth or hundred-and-twentieth year.

Hence the life of man continues to rise and decline throughout these grades of septenaries, from which it took the name of climacteric; and it is a fact, as Seneca and others affirm, that in each of these periods of seven years, the human frame undergoes a change. From this it follows that the diseases which attend on the limits of these epochs are always the most dangerous. The Gentiles had great dread of this occurrence, and with good reason, since they had no hope, and death was always a source of fear to them, and therefore they always congratulated one another when these crises were past.

It may here be opportune to draw attention to the remarkable correspondence which exists between the external world and the world of the human kingdom, which is man, and also to see how both are maintained and flourish. God, the Author and Father of all things, during a term of seven days, produced this grand creation which we behold, and supported it from one to seven days with the powers and influences which descended from on high. And into seven ages is its duration divided. From this is understood what is declared in the Book of Creation,[2] that God perfected on the seventh day all what-

[1] Lib. 83, pp. 58, t. 41.

[2] Genesis ii.

soever works He had determined to effect; which means to say that, until the seventh day no created things were perfect, nor had they attained to their fulness; because they were, so to say, on the road towards perfection, and, had they not reached it, they would have been, so to speak, *abortive*. The Hebrew word, which is there employed, meaning "fulfilled" and "finished," is of great depth of meaning, because it not only signifies what we are in process of explaining, viz. that it was perfect and without flaw in its work, but likewise it signifies the reins, wherein are held the strength and desire of procreation. So that it may be said and understood that all this beautiful mechanism of the world is like a divine childbirth, and a creature of God, drawn from the virtue of His omnipotence—from nothingness to the being that it has. Hence all creatures assume to be similar to the principle whence they were drawn; these, in their turn, also producing some being possessing these same limitations which their Maker placed in them of seven ages, whether of days or years. From this is likewise comprehended why God did not wish the name to be given to the child until after the seventh day, as though the being was still a thing which was not. And Aristotle observes,[1] in his book of the History of Animals that many died before attaining the eighth day. This is the divine secret that is contained in numbers; and I know not whether the philosophers themselves, who so largely discoursed upon numbers, comprehended the mystery.

Aristotle derides Empedocles and Plato, his master, because they laid such stress on this matter; but his ambitious words were not sufficient to derogate from either the glory or renown which they acquired from their close study of the divine letters, and by communicating

[1] Lib. 7, *et ult.*

with such sages as had a still greater knowledge of them, from which sources they derived many of the wise thoughts which they have given to the world. But of this I will speak no more at present, because the infancy and the puberty of our saint need our further consideration.

It was a custom in ancient times for the sons of the noblest in the land, when still youths, to serve at the banquets of the great and at the solemnities of the sacrifices, to offer the cup and to dispense the wine to the invited guests. And Athenæus[1] thus refers to what the son of King Menelaus did: "And to this day this service is performed at table in France by those called pages, as is likewise done in Castile, thus, in a certain manner preserving the name and office of the ancient nobility. These were youths of tender age, and were selected, as far as it was possible, of equal height, and similar in age, countenance, and style. The ancients never did anything in a meaningless way and at haphazard. They invested all things with a certain mystery; and in this service of making boys serve as pages of the cup in their sacrifices, they taught us much. Because, without doubt, the souls of the little ones and of youths of tender age are in truth like to empty chalices, since they no less thirst to drink the liquor of good doctrine than old men to desire wine. And if the old men are cheered and recreated by the juice of the generous vine, much more are the tender spirits of those fair youths delighted with the sweetness of science; and by pouring out the wine to drink in the sacrifice, it would seem as though they demanded, in return, that the old men should enlighten them in the sacraments and in the mysteries and secrets that are enclosed in the sacrifices." It will be very opportune here to describe that singular figure by which the Egyptians depicted their god Canopus.

[1] Lib. 10, c. 7.

The whole figure was in the form of a cup, such as we call *imperial.* The face and head were those of a boy; the ears were large and uncovered; the body draped or enveloped closely by a net, similarly as we moderns cover cups or chalices of gold, or china bowls to save them from being broken or injured. The figure was finished by the feet being placed close together, forming the stem and pedestal to the whole. In its hands it held a staff, the top of which finished with the head of a lark; lower down the staff was pierced through by a stick, which thus formed a cross, and in its hands grasped the letter A. By this symbol they wished to signify the whole discourse, condition, and state of a child, and the fair hope promised of its future if the child was brought up as it should be. For this reason the figure bore the head of a boy, because youth is a fragile, critical period, and, unless great care is taken of a child, it runs a great danger, as our saint will tell us farther on, when he speaks of himself. This fact is also implied by the net with which Canopus is girt, which is no other than education, fear, and the proper respect with which a child should be bound and safeguarded. Moreover, great care should be taken to instil into the child some good liquor of instruction, for which its pure soul is athirst, and for right good reasons did the ancients give their god large open ears, which are like a mouth, through which these delicate cups are to be filled. And, whereas these ears are wide awake to receive good doctrine, all the other members and senses must needs be well girt and covered up, in order that these powers be not unbound so as to do anything exceeding good morals and against modesty, in accordance with what the apostle St. James teaches when he says, we should be "swift to hear and slow to speak." What liquor is to be poured into those receptacles is declared by the symbol it holds in its hands:

the staff crowned by the head of a lark, signifying the course of life which is all to be employed in the divine praises, rising up from the earth even as the lark soars heavenwards, pouring its melodious strains. The whole of this life must be fitted and sustained upon the *Thau*, which is the cross-hilt of this staff. And the first object, which should be placed in the hands of the child and impressed on its heart, is the knowledge of the Christian religion, which is wholly founded on the Cross, and then be guided to learn contempt of the world, to bear suffering, and to be patient in all adversities, and to imitate Christ. Along these paths is progress made, and by no others, towards eternal life signified by the letter A. For this letter, bearing the form of a pyramid, ends in a point, and is the symbol of simplicity and the most perfect union, and being wide open at the base, without limits, it manifests that it embraces and encloses within itself all things,—the proper signs of eternity. Hence this spiritual receptacle of the youth, being filled by the fragrant liquor of doctrine at the commencement of life, will retain, as said the poet, a good odour, and persevering in purity and innocence of life, that soul will attain to be, not only the chalice, but the very temple of the Holy Ghost.

All this and much more, did the ancients tell us allegorically by the figure of their god Canopus, and it was with good reason that St. Peter in his Epistle (2 Peter ii.) calls "learned" the fables of the ancients. And, in passing, it may be said here that neither Suidas, nor Rufinus, nor others, who judged that in all these ideas there was naught else but ridiculous rivalries between the god of the Chaldeans, which was fire, and the god of the Egyptians, which was Canopus, understood the figures signified. For to people who were so learned and enlightened as were the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, who held so close an

intercourse with the holy patriarchs, in whom were found the good seed of sound doctrine, no such childish ideas could be ascribed. This also will be made manifest to us by experience when treating of the infancy and puberty of our saint, of whom, since his parents had brought him up with such care, and he himself from his tenderest years had practised the holiest exercises of religion, good instruction and pure morals, great hopes were entertained of a grand future, as antiquity signified to us by the statue of the god Canopus.

Farther on we shall see also that he became a handsome youth, and how in the *pedigree* of the Church, as well as at the grand open banquet celebrated in her, he, who was so brimful of her holy sacraments, will serve the cup and liquor of the most precious wine to all the guests, during the first and second periods of his age.

It therefore behoves all of us to consider with great attention these things. To some of us, because having lost that innocence with which we were invested in the new regeneration when having been born anew, we obtained the right to the heirship of the kingdom of Heaven, we may be able to return once again to enjoy our forfeited inheritance by means of penance, imitating the example of so great a Father, recovering lost purity and holiness. To others again, who are beginning anew the path of perfection, in order that they may see where to place their feet, and that the narrow path be not obliterated by the dust aroused by the crowds of worldlings, with which dust our eyes become blinded, and we find ourselves unable to discover the inheritance so greatly desired by all, and instead of finding Jerusalem, the blessed city of peace, union, conformity, and light, we should instead stumble into Babylon, full of confusion and disorder, without peace, without harmony, and without light.

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

On the Birthplace, Parentage, and Name of Saint Jerome.

All holy writers teach that when writing the lives of saints, who perfectly despised the world, we should not lay any stress on the things which they held in disesteem; nor proceed in accordance with the laws of the world, taking account of nobility of parentage and investigating the antiquity of the house. Because those, who within themselves have every cause of glory and praise, have small need to demand any from the outside world. Also, because he, who considers the state of a Christian, will perceive, that independently of the fact that we proceed from one ancient stock, where all nobilities are alike, and one common hearth, whence we all spring; we have one only Father, who is Christ, from whom with so much equality we proceed on our journey towards an equal inheritance, out of which, through our own fault, we have been exiled. And, if the first and common father as regards the natural being is One, and One also the Father in the supernatural order, the line of procedure without variation and the goal to which we journey the same, it follows that all the other divisions which we perceive are only inventions of the world, which the heavens deride and the saints scorn, and which will perish as quickly as the foundations, on which they are

based, are weak and faulty. Although this be of itself true, and of small value for the glory of the saints, and it be of little moment to mention such-like points, yet it is nevertheless imperative in histories relating to saints to take some notice of these things for our profit and spiritual advantage; forasmuch as in the realms above, where the blessed enjoy God, they have a manner of inclination (if we may be allowed so to express it) of protecting their own lands, in order to succour them in their needs, and make cause in the Divine audience on their behalf, when they are just ones, and when not just to withdraw them. Also, because the natives of such lands themselves study with greater attention the lives of those who were born within the walls of their native place, and who now are so high in glory, and are thereby encouraged to follow their well-marked footsteps without feeling that the path of Christian perfection is impossible, since they perceive that their own neighbours have journeyed along it.

For all these considerations, when seeking to investigate the birthplace of our saint, it will not be undue to this Christian history, nor be ascribed to vanity, if some labour be undertaken to find it, nor to argue for it, as happened in the cities of Greece, where, at the price of many lives and much contention, the cities each put forth their respective claim in favour of being the birthplace of Melesigenes, who, on account of being blind, was called Homer;[1] and so rife did the dispute become that some even called him their god, erecting a temple to him, as we are assured by trustworthy authors was the case in the city of Smyrna.

Somewhat similar, but in a more just cause, occurs in respect to the country of our saint and doctor, because

[1] Cicero in *Orat. pro Archia.* Herodotus, Plutar., Gellius, Lib. iii.

albeit he says distinctly that his native place was Stridon,[1] at one time situated on the confines of Dalmatia and Pannonia, and which was later on assailed by the barbarian Goths, nevertheless, in the examination of this point, there arise great difficulties and many differences of opinion.

The reason of this was the desolation caused by Alaric and Radagisus, captains of the Goths, before passing on to Italy, and which was so great that the saintly doctor says in the *Commentaries on Habacuc*, "that they left alive no man whether great or small, nor even such animals as are necessary for the service of man." And in the *Commentary on Sophonias*, he says: "The animals also felt the wrath of the Lord, because when the cities were destroyed and the inhabitants perished, the fields remained devastated of animals, and the air of birds. A witness of this is Illyria, as also Thrace, and the land, where I was born, in which, but for the earth itself, and the brambles, air, and the buckthorn, there has remained nought, for all has perished."

These territories having thus been laid waste, as our saint tells us, doubts then arose and opinions became rife as to his actual birthplace. The Italians, desirous of claiming for themselves such a great man, adduced a thousand reasons; the natives of Dalmatia and Sclavonia, gave as many more, yet all these put forward such good foundations for their claims, that it became a very difficult task to give a verdict in favour of any one of them. The Italians say[2] and with truth, that Istria is one of the regions of Italy, and was originally inhabited by some of the soldiers which Actæus, the King of the Island of Colchos, had sent in pursuit of the Argonauts. These founded the

[1] In Carthage.

[2] Blondo, *De Italia Illustrata*. Regione xi.

city of Aquileia, and established themselves there. The province of Istria terminates on the south with the Illyrian Sea, which is now called the Adriatic, and the Gulf of Venice. On the east lies Dalmatia, on the north Pannonia. In Istria is found a small town called Esdrigna, the same as in former times was called Stridon, the native land of our glorious saint. They also declare that in this same town there exists a sepulchre, which by ancient tradition is said to be that of Eusebius, the father of St. Jerome, as was stated in an inscription found on the stone of the sepulchre, engraved on a slab of lead. This statement is confirmed by the intimate friendship which existed between Jerome and Chromatius, proved by the many letters that passed between them, as well as with Rufinus, since both were of Aquileia, and it is more than probable that, whereas they came from neighbouring places, a great friendship had sprung up among them.

Of no less force are the arguments brought forward by the Sclavonians; for it is a well-established fact among them that the letters and characters, which they use at the present day, are very dissimilar from those of the Latins, Greeks, and Hebrews, and that they were received from St. Jerome, and were considered as his own invention; and those from the Sclavonic tongue and in the selfsame characters were used by him in their Divine office, which up to the present time they use, and which is the same as we all follow, and which was confirmed by Pope Eugenius in the Council of Florence. And even Blondus himself declares that it was he who was the instrument of the same, and that the affair had passed through his hands. Furthermore, as we shall see presently, he translated into the same language the whole of the sacred Scriptures. From this they argue that, had the holy doctor been an Italian, he would never have boasted of so uncouth a

tongue, nor would he have given to his countrymen such a singular language and letters.

Those of Italy reply that it is not uncommon for peoples on the frontiers to speak the language of the adjoining countries, and even of lands still farther removed, such as is the case in the Abruzzi and Calabria, where the Greek language has always been spoken, albeit the fact that it is a larger province than Istria; similarly, those who dwell in the valleys of the Alps generally speak French, and those of Verona and Vicenza, which are large cities, speak the Teutonic language, although they lie far distant from Germany. And in the same manner, either because Istria was so near to Sclavonia, or because, for a certain period, she was subject to Sclavonian rule, her people came to speak the language of Sclavonia.

In this contention, allowing that either party may be right in their claims, I deem that those speak and think with truth, who declare that it is of minor importance among Christians whether the saint belonged to this or that land, forasmuch as it be but an earthly consideration, rather should we wish to rise with him in a spiritual sense. And, without any manner of doubt, such would be a better title-deed to the birthplace of the saint, and be more of his spirit to imitate him in his life and conversation. If this latter test be accepted, I venture to say that St. Jerome should belong to Spain, since, in that country we see under his name so saintly a religious order existing, and the most illustrious houses of that order throughout Europe; in which communities for over 230 years, up to the present (1595), his sons in Christ have, with singular observance, devoted themselves to following the work he laboured in. These religious have always the sacred texts on their lips, the divine praises are sung by them without intermission day and night; spiritual conferences and pious

questions divide their time. The Fathers also investigate and examine theological works in their original languages, in Hebrew and in Greek, drawing from their hidden depths rare fruits. A great testimony to the truth of what I say is the famous house of San Lorenzo el Real, a worthy work of Philip II., where, in what regards the divine office and worship, sacred writings and letters styled scholastic and positive, the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, this Order has attained such a high degree of excellence that I know not where greater proficiency exists. Yet what in this holy institution is more the aim, and in which the greatest solicitude is sought, is to become most like their spiritual Father and founder, in those things which he excelled, namely, true perfection of life, the renunciation and forgetfulness of the world, retirement, mortification, and poverty. Hence, he who observes and looks well into the rule of this manner of interior life, and notes the fervour and constancy practised in the observance of the statutes and constitutions, will perceive (albeit outwardly it may appear otherwise) that few of the religious orders surpass this one, even such as are discalced and follow strict observance. Therefore, whether Jerome be of Stridon, in Dalmatia, or he be of Istria, it makes very little difference, although the manner of imitating this holy doctor in Spain far surpasses that of other countries; for, of course, this contention only regards his birthplace. All the Fathers agree upon the fact that Jerome's parents were noble and wealthy, since they held landed property and possessed slaves. The saint himself gives us this to understand, as we shall see farther on, for he sent his brother Paulinian to dispose of what little had escaped destruction at the hands of the barbarians. And in another part of his writings he says that when a child he used on holidays to run about the

spacious dwellings of the servants, and domestics of his father's household.

According to Aristotle, nobility is divided into lineage and virtue, and, according to Socrates, into nobility of body and nobility of soul; all which good qualities were united in our saint. And in truth nobility of lineage is not a thing of small moment, nor one to be omitted in the lives of saints; because it is proper and in reason, says the same philosopher, that those born of parents in a higher class of society should be nobler and better than others of inferior rank. The name of Jerome's father, as the holy doctor himself tells us, was Eusebius, and it was appropriate that he should be so called, because, in its original signification, it means "*Godliness*," and it is only natural that the shoot springing from that noble tree should be Jerome, which in the Greek tongue signifies "*holy law*," a fit presage of what he was to be; for, from godliness and religion springs the perfect knowledge of the divine law. It is a saying of God Himself that He will not enter into a wicked soul, but into a soul that is humble, and which fears and loves Him, and is obedient to His divine precepts. It is a right and prudent counsel for parents to give their children appropriate names, so that on hearing its name the child may call to mind the particular virtue, which distinguished the saint whose name it bears, in order to practise it. Thus, when parents call their son John or Joseph, and he hears his name, there should occur to his mind not only the virtue, which the first of these names indicate (unless he be so ignorant thereof that he knows not what the name implies), and his soul is thereby refreshed, but there ought also to arise in his heart the desire of the divine grace, which distinguished him, and its increase, as is signified by the second name. This manner of naming children, in

harmony with distinguished persons, was greatly practised by the ancients, yet not with that vain respect ascribed to Pythagoras, who believed that in proper names there was a singular value or power, whether the word consisted of many or few syllables, had even or odd number of letters, and who supposed that in all this there were enclosed good or evil results,—and so Terence informs us that from the power of his name Hector believed himself bound to slay Patroclus, and he himself in turn was to be killed by Achilles,[1]—for, as may well be perceived, this is all childishness, unworthy of Pythagoras.

The proper reason is what we have stated. Thus Aristotle interpreted his name to mean that he should do nothing but that which would tend to an honest end, and what would help him to attain it with due perfection. Socrates likewise drew from his name the interpretation that he should keep himself and all those, with whom he conversed, healthy and safe, not only from bodily ailments, but also from those of the soul. Pythagoras and Plutarch interpreted their destinies in like manner. The first was told that his name implied that, in order to be a good preceptor, it was not sufficient only to speak and to feel, but that he must have also the power to persuade men to virtue; and the second one, that he must seek for true riches, which time could not corrupt. In the same way might we philosophise of many others, and of our own Jerome among them, and we shall see how in after life he acted up to the goodly name which was given him, when he was consecrated to God, in order that he should ever ponder on His holy and sacred law. I admit that we should not in all cases assign a mystery to names, but only when God assigns them to us, or changes them in order to manifest His divine will, or when parents give

[1] Pliny.

their child a name, in order to recall some especial event, which may have taken place at the birth (for both these manners of naming do we observe in the sacred writings); but when we perceive that the life and the course of events correspond in all things to the surname of a person, we may prudently infer (as dialecticians say) that it was a thing arranged by God that he should be so named. And He Who in time, and from before all time, had pre-ordained the lives of the saints, what marvel that He should have also assigned their respective names? This is evident from the long catalogue of examples we might make of names, not only found in the Old Testament —for we might be told that these were no more than figures—but also those of the New Testament, and even in more recent times when we see such names as Lawrence, Stephen, Vincent, Dominic, Benedict, Bernard, Ambrose, and hundreds of others, whose lives so admirably corresponded to their names. It is related of Domitius, the father of Nero, that on being congratulated upon the birth of the son who was born to him, not only did he not manifest joy at the news, but with a sad countenance replied: "It is not possible that from me and Agrippina there can be born anything but what will be pernicious to the republic." What a true and dire prognostic! And on the contrary, how well might the parents of our saint rejoice, as did the parents of the Baptist, whose father being called Zachary, which means "*remembrance of God*," and his mother, Elizabeth, which is equal to "*the Lord hath sworn*," it might be inferred that the newborn child was a "messenger of the Lord," and, as it were, the harbinger of grace and mercy, whom God was minded to show to His people, as He had promised and sworn to do.

The same may be predicted in regard to our saint,

that he would prove a general benefit to the world; for Jerome to be son of Eusebius is a true promise that from piety should spring forth great fruits out of the sacred law.

What was the name of his mother the saint has not informed us; he simply states that both his parents were Christians. He had an aunt, sister of his mother, who was called Castorina, with whom he had some differences it is supposed in regard to the division of the family inheritance, but this seems unfounded. Be the reason what it may, it is known with certainty that by letters he implored her many times to allow her anger to pass away; and in the letters that remain to us of Jerome there is one of such good doctrine and advice that I deem it wise to quote it here, because in the lives of saintly doctors their doctrine and writings are the best means of manifesting to us their souls. It runs as follows:—

"The Apostle St. John, who wrote the Holy Gospel, in one of his Epistles says—*That he who hateth his brother is a murderer*, and with reason, because, as murder generally springs from hatred, he that hates, although he may not have actually struck a blow with intent to kill, yet at least in his heart has killed his fellow-being. You will say: 'To what purpose is all this?' Because, laying aside the former anger, let us prepare in our breasts a fit dwelling for the Lord, and, as David says, '*Be angry and sin not*,' or as St. Paul more fully declares to us, '*Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*' What then shall we do? On the last day in regard to ourselves what shall we answer over whose anger the sun has never set? Our Lord says in the Gospel: '*If thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there thou rememberest that thy brother hath something against thee, leave there thy gift on the altar, and first go and be*

reconciled to him, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.' Alas! unhappy that I am! not to say thou also! who for so long a time have not offered the holy sacrifice on the altar, or, if I did offer it, the fire of anger being still alive, the gift was as though it were worthless! What do we say in that prayer we so often repeat: 'Lord, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'? For the words are so far removed from what is felt in the soul, and the prayer so contrary to deeds! I pray thee, therefore, again, as for more than a year I have besought thee by other letters, that the peace of the Lord, which He left us, we both may enjoy, for my desires and thy soul He Himself looks into, and, very shortly, before His Tribunal, either reconciliation and renewed friendship will have its due reward, or the unforgiving anger and severed peace will have its dire punishment, as to which peace, shouldst thou still not desire it, which may God forbid, I shall remain free, because this my letter, on being read to thee, will leave me absolved of any fault." Here we see the purity of intention of the saint, and his desire for that evangelical peace, which is so greatly commended to us.

St. Jerome had also a sister, whose name he does not mention, and a brother, whose name was Paulinian, who was the youngest member of the family. We shall speak of him later on in the course of the saint's life.

Having thus described the country, parentage, and relatives of St. Jerome, it now remains to ascertain, if it be possible, when he was born, for opinions differ as to the precise date of his birth, and in truth we have only conjecture to guide us, and with which to build a theory. Some say he was born in the fifteenth year of the Empire of Constantine the Great,[1] others say in the twenty-fifth year, and others again on the thirty-first, which was the

[1] Sigisbertus, Beda, Prosper, Erasmus.

last year of his Empire. There are others, again, who hold that he was born during the empire of Constantius, the son of Constantine, who governed, according to Orosius, for twenty-four years. This opinion appears to be nearest the truth, albeit it may be contrary to the common belief, for it even would seem stated by the learned doctor himself; for when writing his *Commentaries on Habacuc*,[1] he says, when expounding the words of the prophet—*Maledixsti sceptris ejus capiti bellatorum ejus:* "I being at that time yet a lad, studying the principles of grammar, all the cities were running with the blood of the victims when the news suddenly arrived, in the midst of the heat and fury of the persecution, that Julian Augustus was dead." Then one of the infidels wittily said: "I know not how these Christians can say that their God is most patient and long-suffering, for I know not what wrath could have been more suddenly manifested, because not so much as for a short space of time did he stay His vengeance." From this we can argue that if Julian held the Empire for no more than two years, (a fact which is well known and proved), and seeing that our saint was so young that he was still learning the rudiments of grammar, and, at most, could be no more than fourteen or fifteen years of age, it appears certain that he must have been born in the tenth or twelfth year of the Empire of Constantius, and by no possibility in the time of Constantine, and about the year 345 of the birth of our Lord. This is the most certain date we can offer in a matter so obscure. He studied in the house of his parents some of the parts of grammar, and had a preceptor so severe that he called him *Orbilius* in allusion to the master of Horace the poet, using towards him the same epithet, calling him *plagosus*, because no doubt he whipped

[1] *Epist.* 41.

him sorely. From this tutor, and more so from his most pious parents, he learned the law and the Christian faith, together with good and saintly customs; for it is of great importance that children should learn these things from their earliest years, imbibing them even with their mother's milk, in order that both soul and body should grow up together well and healthy, the soul in Christian virtues and the body in strength of members. Together with Jerome another youth was brought up, whose name was Bonosus; they loved one another tenderly, they were foster-brothers, and the same nurse would carry them both in her arms; together they learned their first letters, and together they grew up to be young men, and together (as we shall declare later on) they departed to live in the desert, as Jerome himself, in almost the self-same words, makes mention when writing to Rufinus.[1]

[1] Habacuc, c. iii. v. 14.

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

The Parents of St. Jerome send him to Rome to pursue his Studies. What these Studies were, and what the Saint did.

The holy youth, being well instructed in the Christian religion and in the first rudiments of letters, had arrived at an age when he began to give ample testimony of his genius and of his qualities; hence his parents and his wise preceptor, in view of his natural abilities and quickness of understanding, together with the good habits and pious inclinations, which even from his tender age he manifested, decided to send him to Rome to follow higher studies, because, although good letters flourished in France, in Spain, and in Africa at that time, and many learned men were known to exist in those countries, nevertheless, in what regarded the purity of the Latin tongue, a great degeneration had taken place since early times. And in Rome, as in its fountain and source, the language was better preserved and far less corrupted than elsewhere, although not with its pristine splendour; furthermore, as regarded the study of other languages as well as the cultivation of sound doctrine in all its purity, Rome was always held as the mother and well-spring of learning, and will continue to be so. This wise arrangement on the part of his parents he later on greatly praises when speaking of the mother of Rusticus, the monk, who, after sending

her son for some time to pursue his studies in France, where learning and *belles lettres* flourished at that period, he was sent, like our Jerome, to Rome to conclude his education, and so that he might receive the good results of both schools of learning. On this point the parents of Jerome acted very prudently, and thus the reproach could not be cast against them as was done to that Roman artist, who painted well the surface, but not so his figures, since they all turned out so plain. Because, although it be not in the power of parents to have children beautiful in countenance, yet they possess in themselves a great power of rendering them beautiful in soul, infusing into them by means of counsels and examples, good and holy customs; filling them, as we have said above, by means of right masters, with good science, and not allowing them to be like blank boards, whereon nothing is written, or similar to huge blocks.

This condition we notice very much in regard to the nobles of the epoch, who considered it then quite advisable that their children should grow up in ignorance, believing that all can be covered up by wealth and the estates to be bequeathed to them; as a philosopher said, it was "like a sheath of gold holding a wooden sword," and in the end these ignorant nobles become the laughing-stock of the world. Hence, for this reason did these prudent parents of Jerome seek to withdraw their gifted, youthful son from all the blandishments of the world when yet in his early boyhood, despite that he was the eldest-born and the heir, and, moreover, the best-loved child of the family, in order that so exalted an intellect should not be wasted, and they were ready even to deprive themselves of his company, and to send him to where he should find a proper and wide sphere for carrying out the promises of his genius, since it is nothing

short of the highest importance to establish well the first principles of science, and to form the mind to what is noble and good, so that the taste for goodness and true wisdom should ever increase.

In most of the first-born and heirs mentioned in the Old Testament we notice failure, and in not a few cases also in people of our own time. Cain was the first-born of Adam, and our wicked brother. To Abraham was given Ishmael as his first-born, and in the house of Isaac Esau was forestalled. To Jacob Reuben was not the best of brothers, and Eliab, the first-born of Jesse, was not, in the eyes of God, so good as the last of his children, who was David; nor did the latter witness good success in his son Ammon, who was the first-born of his children, and many others in like manner. I am well aware that in all these instances there was hidden some especial mystery; nevertheless we can well affirm that these heirs were evil through their own malice, and from this fact, as well as from the neglecting to correct them in their evil customs, we may well declare that the cause was due to their having been brought up too delicately, their parents having loved them unduly, allowing them to follow their course of evil rather than thwart and reprimand them, and, being treated with too much deference, they grew up in their pride, and by degrees, with the strength of years, their evil inclinations begat such lamentable results. But these discreet parents of the saint already foresaw that God had given them this son, not merely for their own benefit, but for the common good of the world, and to be a wide-spreading light in the Church, and thus they sent him at an early age to Rome, the common mother of the churches. There he learned Latin and Greek with the happy success we perceive in his works. In doing this he followed the advice of Quinctilian, because the Latin

tongue softens the uncouthness of the Greek language. In these studies he had as his chief preceptors Donatus, the author of the *Commentaries* on Virgil and Terence, as he himself declares in his *Apologia* against Rufinus. "I believe," he says, "you must have read the *Commentaries* of Aspius upon Virgil and Sallust, and those of Volcacius on the *Orations* of Cicero, those of Victorinus upon the *Dialogues*, and those of my master Donatus on the *Comedies* of Terence and Virgil." Some say that his master for rhetoric was Victorinus, yet it clearly seems manifest that it was not so, because, albeit at times he may say *our* Victorinus, that does not mean to say that he was his master, but it was a common speech of his, in order to distinguish the Greeks from the Latins, which former he calls *ours*. It is also proved that Victorinus taught rhetoric in the time of Constantinus, as the doctor himself declares in the catalogue of illustrious men, at which time, as we have shown, he was either not yet born, or was so young that he could not yet have gone to Rome. And in the *Additions* to Eusebius, he says: "Victorinus, the rhetorician, and Donatus, our master, are renowned in Rome and held in high esteem. The former—Victorinus—merited to have a statue erected to his honour in the forum of Trajan." Naturally in this place he would have said "my preceptors," if both had been so, and this same method of speaking of them in other places is followed by him.

The time spent in Rome he did not employ solely in the study of human letters; rather he employed a great portion of it in those, to which Heaven had already inclined him; that is to say, in such things as appertained to piety and the higher virtues. He frequently resorted to the churches, visiting the hallowed cemeteries, the sepulchres of the holy martyrs, in which that great

city so abounded, for during this early period of his life his exercises were already those of a more mature age. This he himself tells us with his usual sweetness, when writing on the prophet Ezechiel he expounds the vision of the Temple, which the Prophet saw, which, becoming very difficult and pondering on its obscurity and the little light he had for working out its exposition with clearness, he makes an allusion to this effect: "Being in Rome, when quite a young boy, I learnt there human letters, and very frequently, along with other young students, companions of about my own age, we used, on Feast days, to go and visit the sepulchres of the Apostles and Martyrs. Oftentimes we would enter into those caves, descend into subterranean places, and such as enter them feel naught else on both sides of the wall but the bodies of the buried dead, and the whole is so shrouded in darkness that the words become verified there which were spoken by the prophet, '*let the living descend into hell.*' Sometimes we saw windows, but so far away that they were like loopholes in the heights. Through these a dim light would penetrate, which somewhat lessened the obscurity and the shadows, and resembled more murky holes than windows. On passing quickly out of these subterranean vaults there follows another spell of darkness, and it needs caution to enter the next cave step by step, because one is surrounded by the darkness of night, reminding one of the words of Virgil—

> Souls with such horror surrounded,
> Together in silence stand terrified."

It is remarkable how the inclinations of boyhood reveal the nobleness of the soul, and in the first efforts and trials of earliest childhood the promise of future years become discovered, because beings at that age allow themselves

to be ruled by impulse, and no considerations avail to deter them.

From this pious exercise above described we may conjecture what was the generous emulation of this saintly youth—an emulation proper to young men of high and lofty ideals.

When he walked along these hallowed places, enveloped in darkness, and touched in the sacred gloom the bodies of the martyrs, I can well imagine how in thought he would cry out: "Oh that I also were a martyr! and that my bones might merit the honour of being laid here in this goodly company, and my soul be one day dwelling with theirs in the same happy mansions as they do after having suffered martyrdom for Christ! Oh that the ministers of this apostate Julian would come here now and take me a prisoner, because I am a Christian, and let me suffer a thousand torments in so just a cause! I beseech Thee, O God, that there may be glorious witnesses to the divine truth, to the gospel and the Christian law, in order that, through the merits of Jesus Christ, I may be baptized —first in the Holy Ghost, and then in the fire of persecution and in my blood!"

If this emulation in a child was able to effect so much in the heart of Alexander the Great, when he was but a boy, on witnessing the deeds done by his father Philip, that he burst into a flood of tears because no more deeds remained to him to execute, what ardour must not have been aroused in the breast of Jerome when he pondered on the example left to us by those now lifeless bodies, which in life had so gloriously fought for Christ, and had obtained such signal victories for Him? Without doubt his generous soul did not deceive him, nor, indeed, had God preserved his life for any lesser deeds than those which the martyrs had performed.

Returning to our purpose, I say, that when pursuing these early studies he attained to a greater and higher knowledge of Latin and Greek than was deemed necessary in those times, and he therefore passed on to other studies, and with a marvellous subtlety penetrated science and attained a deeper insight than others could obtain during many years of study, for we see manifested in him an admirable love of discipline, and in each branch of learning he excelled as though all his efforts had been directed towards it alone. These truths will be plainly perceived by such as read with attention his writings, because these grand talents are manifest throughout the vast extent of his works. Of rhetoric I will only say of it what is stated, and what he himself declares, when he affirms that he exercised himself greatly in this science; and this will be more fully explained farther on, when the proper place offers itself. Of dialectics, which are, as it were, the guide to show the road to other teachings, I wish it to be understood, in some sense, how greatly he laboured in order to refute what is said by some, who judge that the science of dialectics is not mastered unless a man speaks in terms and expressions that are barbaric, and which had its origin in the miserable ages, when literature was sadly dragged along the ground. I confess that this the saint did not know, because I do not find it in Aristotle, nor in Hippocrates, Porphyrius, Alexander, and others from whom he tells us he studied logic. When writing to Domion, in respect to certain advice he gives him, of a daring little monk, who had reprehended certain things which the saintly doctor had written in a book against Jovinian, he says: "Your letters partake of both love and complaints—love, because warning me with all earnestness even of such things as are in me secure. You dread the complaints of such as are not lovers of good, and who seek occasions of sin, and

scorn their brethren, and set scandal against the very son of their mother. You write to me that a certain monk, or rather a nobody, who wanders about in streets and squares, a lover of sowing novelties, a stinging talker, a murmurer of evil speeches, one who having a beam in his own eye yet wishes to draw forth the mote out of mine, who ceases not to preach in bands against me and of the books I wrote against Jovinian, is always biting with the fury of a dog: this dialectician of your city, a great personage in the family of Plautus, most certainly has never read the *Categories of Aristotle*, nor the Perihermenios, nor the Topics, nor even the quotations of Cicero, read only by mobs of vulgar people and conventicles of women; yet he forms and composes syllogisms, as though what I had said were fallacies or sophistries of small importance, and assumes by this means to undo them. Oh, ignorant that I am! Who deemed that these things could not be known but through the philosophers? and dolt that I was, who so often would read with greater zest that which I had to correct, and even blot out, than that which I had to write. In vain, therefore, did I undertake to translate the *Commentaries of Alexander*, and in vain was it that my master, as one that is learned in teaching, took me right through the Introduction (Isagoge) of Porphyrius on to the logic of Aristotle; and in vain (leaving aside what concerns the liberal arts) did I have as my masters in the holy Scriptures Gregory Nazianzen and Didymus. Nor has the erudition of the Hebrews been of any advantage to me, nor the continual meditation and reflection which I have practised ever since I was a youth up to the present time on the law, on the prophets, on the gospels and the epistles of the apostles; for we have come across a man who was perfect without a master, some divine spirit,—or else some fanatical imp has entered into the soul of the same, and of himself he has come forth

well qualified and taught, surpassing in eloquence Cicero, in argument Aristotle, in prudence and solidity Plato, in erudition Aristarchus, in the fulness of book-lore Origen, and in the science of the sacred letters Didymus."

From this is manifestly seen whether he studied in earnest dialectics in right style and good order, and like one, who was well versed in them, notices the deficiency of the same in Rufinus, telling him in the *Apologia* that he knew not what it was to divide, or define, and styles him Epicurean, because those of that sect paid but little attention to this study. The most conclusive proof of Jerome's knowledge in dialectics would be to read his books with attention, for he who should take any pleasure in doing so would find in the Treatises against Vigilantius, Helvidius, Jovinian, and others, that the force and sinews of his reasoning, the facility with which he refutes his opponents, manifests great subtlety in this science, and it is the finished style with which, in so lofty a manner, he carries it through, that never allows an improper word to lower a single point of the dignity of the oration, from which the ignorant (who do not attain to this)[1] think that there are no dialectics there; and they speak the truth when they refer to their own.

It is a remark often made by men of little piety, and others, respecting religious and modest men, such as our saint, that they were very free of speech, and too overbearing for saints, and other things which can only be taken as coming from such lips as theirs, which are wont to speak with but little respect of the saints; and this remark they found more especially in this very Epistle we have quoted.[1] They do not perceive, or do not wish to perceive, the reason the saint had for speaking as he did, which was the upholding of the authority of the

[1] Erasmus, in *Epist.* 51.

Church, and the defending of her holy doctrines and dogmas against those, who, as daring as they are deficient in erudition, both in human letters as in the divine, assume to follow or invent new doctrines; and with equal daring speak and write publicly as in secret against those, who defend the cause of the Church. Against such as these there is no more prudent course to take than to treat them as they deserve, paying no attention to them, and in passing undo the fallacy of their foundations, and thus enable the world to see their ignorance, in order that the masses, which are the more easily imposed upon, should understand the truth and be enlightened, and not be blindly induced to follow every new idea and invention of ambitious men. This our saint did, in his Apologetic Epistle against the said monk of the public squares and streets, which was a happy conjunction of terms, "Monk and Rover," when it ought to be "Solitary and Cloistered." In these refutations our great Father performs the office of doctor and master of the Church according to the injunction of St. Paul the Apostle, who said that teachers of divine truths should be steadfast and safe in doctrine, and should be able to refute such as attempt to contradict the teaching of holy Church, thus manifesting to the world their insufficiency. And he, who witnesses how St. Paul treats such men, and what terms are employed by St. Thaddeus in his Epistle concerning them, will not be surprised at what St. Jerome says of them. Notwithstanding this line followed by our saint of zeal and virtuous indignation, there is always visible in his apologies an admirable modesty, a heart truly that of a saint, and a deep contempt of himself; and furthermore, what he writes is solely done for the honour of God, and for the benefit of Holy Church—an aim which is clearly seen in this same Epistle, where he says: "Well might

I turn to bite, did I so wish. I could also tear with sharp tooth him, who bites me, for I myself have also learned, for some time, letters, and held out my hand to be struck; likewise might the proverb be applied to me, which says: 'Beware, for you also have hay in your horn.' But after all that has been said, we should choose rather to be disciples of Him Who said, 'My shoulders I bared to be scourged, and I withdrew not my countenance from the affronts, nor my face from the spittle.' We should be followers of that *One*, Who, when He was reviled, did not revile, and after being buffeted, and scourged, and blasphemed, and fastened to a cross, prayed for those who had crucified Him, saying, '*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*' I also forgive the fault of this brother of mine, because I know that the devil with his cunning and his wiles has, alas! deceived him."

In this manner does he end his Epistle, and in a similar way does he conclude the one which he wrote against Helvidius by saying those humble and devout words:—"It seems to me that you, on finding yourself conquered by the power of truth, will doubtlessly turn against me, and speak in opprobrious terms of my life; but bear in mind, before all things, that all your malice and affronts are turned into glory; and, in truth, it is a great glory for me, that the same mouth, which dared to speak so shamelessly of the purest Mary, should itself speak evil of me, both thus being the victims of the same detracting tongue—the servant, and the mother of God." A similar conclusion does he arrive at when refuting Vigilantius and others; for to be modest and retiring in presence of rude heretics would be ascribed by them, in their haughty minds, to proceed from fear of their own arguments rather than from a sense of humility, of which virtue they know nothing. This I mention, in passing, in

order that, when in the course of this history these or similar passages are quoted as found in the writings of the saint, and when authors are perused who have written on this point, there may be manifested the sanctity of the one and the malice of the others."

As regards that branch of moral philosophy which treats of the virtues (I do not mean solely of ethics), such as the philosophers attained to, but that science of ethics which is imparted by the sacred letters, both ancient and modern, whereby is taught the eradication of the vices and manner of planting the virtues, whosoever would wish to see it in its height without any part being left untouched, and most skilfully shown, let him diligently peruse his Epistles, and he will be amply satisfied. For with what a masterly hand is not the work achieved! What force does he not manifest in persuading and in dissuading at will! And with what delight does he not ravish the reader to the love of the virtues and to the hatred of the vices! Does he not elucidate both economy and politics from their very foundation? I believe that there is not a state or condition of mankind in the world which will not be found therein clearly defined in its entirety, and with all the circumstances pertaining to it.

Some, who have perceived the great advantage of this, have attempted to give his Epistles, or the greater portion of them, in the vernacular, in order that all men should be able to attain to so much doctrine; and with what happy result this bold stroke has succeeded let others judge. In order to translate St. Jerome I deem it necessary to possess his erudition and his spirit. That branch of learning which is called physics, or natural philosophy, he studied with great zeal, and his works clearly demonstrate this to have been the case, for he read Aristotle with great attention in those parts, where he

was obscure. Similarly was he familiar with Theophrastus and Pliny, whom he generally speaks of as historians of Nature. When, in the course of time and in the fulness of age, he perceived how vain and of what small importance were the books of the Gentiles, for, being full of opinions and containing little science, their writings clearly manifested their ambitions and the obscurity of their doctrine, he forthwith withdrew from them. For it seemed to him, as was the case,[1] that there was more philosophy in a few lines of Moses, Job, Solomon, and Isaias than in all the philosophers together, as he himself declares in the proem to his Commentaries on the last-named prophet.[2] And writing on Nahum, he compares those, who devote themselves solely to the philosophy of the Gentiles, to bruchus and locusts, who have wings, but which never enable them to rise higher than the brambles and hedges, nor can their flight be long continued without coming down to the ground. Such are those, who solely confer with Chrysippus and Aristotle, whose works, owing to their intricacies and crudeness, are comparable to the buckthorn and bramble, which keep them well entangled.

In other parts of his writings he says[3] that these philosophers are useful for awakening a desire to find the truth, but are not able to satisfy that desire; or, again, they may be compared to the woman who was troubled with the issue of blood, who had spent her means in paying physicians who never cured her, because they did not understand the cause of the ailment, and who was never healed until she touched the hem of Christ's garment. So also is it with those who seek to appease their desires by perusing Plato and Aristotle, from which is proved how cleverly he, with his genius, had encompassed them. And would to God that with such sane

[1] Proem in Isai. [2] Capit. 3 in Nahum. [3] Psalm cvi. tom. 7.

counsels those would be disillusioned, who think they have acquired truth after having spent much time and wasted oil, yet do not perceive their waste.

What is included in the science of topography, or the description of places, and in its train geometry, which is necessary to it, our doctor attained to fathom in an excellent manner, as is proved by the description he gives of the various places mentioned in the Scriptures, and in a more especial manner those of the Holy Land. Because, although he saw them and walked in them, nevertheless as we shall see farther on, had he not had an entire knowledge of the way to describe them, it would not have sufficed; as is the case with many, who go on pilgrimages, and who pass through provinces and kingdoms and strange lands, yet are unable to afford a truer description than those who saw them not; and these studies are not acquired at the moment when they are required, but have to be learned a long time in anticipation. He who should read his *Commentaries on Ezechiel* will find in the last part how learned St. Jerome was in geometry from the information he affords when he alludes to and agrees with what Josephus says, that the explorers and spies sent by Joshua to the promised land of God were geometricians, because otherwise they would have been unable to bring back such information as was needed.

The knowledge he possessed of chronology and history, sciences so necessary when treating on theology and controversial arguments, was also extensive, as is frequently manifested in the course of his writings, more especially in the last part of his *Commentaries on Daniel*, in which he expounds all those things which so many ages previously had been foretold by the Prophets, and which he demonstrates to have been fulfilled to the letter. This

is declared by the historians, not only the Greek ones, such as Suetonius, Callimachus, Diodorus, Polybius, Posidonius, Claudius Andronicus, and Josephus, but even by the Latins, such as Titus Livy, Tacitus, Justinian, and others. And the large knowledge he had of history can be well seen from the continual allusions he makes of it at every step. All these did Jerome study in Rome, and more especially in order to know how to adorn and embellish theology with all the elegance of both the Latin and Greek languages.

It was a happy inspiration from Heaven that he should thus earnestly pursue these studies at this period of his life, because up to his time amongst the doctors of the Latin Church theology was, so to speak, but in its infancy; and although many understood that science well, yet comparatively few could speak about it, or adorn it with the raiment it demanded in reason. For which cause sacred things were subjects of indifference to many, since they found them so bereft of ornament, and thus they read profane books with greater interest than they did religious ones. Moreover, the learned among the Gentiles (for even at that period there were many) called Christians "*Infants*," scorning them as ignorant persons, who knew not even how to speak. Hence, by the pursuit of these studies and the great erudition of our Jerome these wants were in a great measure remedied, inasmuch as the divine letters were treated of and expounded by him in such lofty language and clear style that many of the greatest geniuses of the Gentiles delighted to read what was written by St. Jerome so that it might be truly said, that the whole of Gentile wisdom placed on one side, opposed to a Jerome of the Christians was able to stand alone on the other side, nor could any be found to surpass him in erudition and in elegance of style. His companions in these studies

were Pammachius, a Roman of high rank, who married Paulina, daughter of St. Paula, and after her death became a monk. This Pammachius lived so saintly a life in the monastic state, and was so esteemed by the Roman people for his virtue that he would have been elected Pope;[1] but, as the saintly doctor himself says, "It was a higher honour to merit the dignity than to possess it." His other companion was Bonosus, of whom we have said in part of our narrative that he had been brought up with him. He also, like Pammachius, was of noble parentage, and, as we shall see farther on in this history, he too became a holy monk. The third companion was Heliodorus, who, on account of his exalted sanctity and virtue, attained to be a bishop, as the same Father declares in the Introduction he wrote upon Abdias, in which, regretting that certain commentaries, full of allegories, which he had written in his youth upon the Prophet, should have been published, and had been distributed among the people, he says as follows: "This was done, my Pammachius, more beloved to me than the light, at the time when, having just quitted the schools of the rhetoricians, we gave ourselves up to the study of divers sciences; and when I and Heliodorus, our beloved, were projecting to withdraw from the world, and to live together in solitude and prayer in the desert of Chalcidia in Syria." From which words we have a clear proof of what we have stated in this discourse respecting the studies and mode of discipline that our glorious saint undertook at this period of his life.

[1] *Epist.* 52.

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

The Baptism of St. Jerome in Rome. The Reason why Baptism was deferred

We have seen the manner in which St. Jerome employed his time in Rome during the period of infancy and puberty —his extensive studies, the great progress he made in them; his holy inclinations and pious customs. As a consequence of these good qualities God inspired his heart with the desire to receive baptism, and no longer to delay doing so, for He wished to raise him up to higher things, and to employ him for the good of His Church. Touched by this holy thought, he was not slow in carrying out this desire, nor did he turn a deaf ear to the voice of God, but rather, raising his eyes to heaven full of tears of joy and gratitude, in humility of soul and with uplifted hands he gave thanks to the Father of Lights, from whom proceeded that sovereign gift. He felt so full of fervour with this desire that he at once resolved upon sending in his name to be placed among the number of catechumens, who were candidates for baptism. In those days this was the first ceremony. After giving in their names they were no longer styled "catechumens," but "*competents*" and "*elected*," because they were then separated from the others to be instructed and prepared for baptism, in contradistinction to the other catechumens, who were only called "*audientes*," "*listeners*," like those who wished to become

Christians, and attended the sermons and discourses on the Christian life and religion, but had not yet demanded baptism. Thus does our saint style them himself in the Epistle he wrote to his friend Pammachius,[1] where he complains of John of Jerusalem, because the candidates or "*competents*" whom he (Jerome) had himself presented to him to be baptized had not been permitted to receive baptism on the holy day of Easter. St. Augustine, in like manner, applies to them[2] this name, as a name well accepted, in his book *De Cura pro Mortuis* and in other parts of his writings; and St. Leo Pope,[3] in his fourth Epistle and elsewhere, also designates the aspirants to baptism by this name, although he more commonly calls them "*elect*."

This was, as it were, in imitation of the earthly Militia called *delecti* who submitted their names to be registered, which was done by taking the oath of fealty to obey the Emperor, and which was the military pledge. To this similarly does St. Paul allude when he calls the faithful by the name of "soldiers," and arms them with sword, breastplates, shields, helmets, and the rest of military accoutrements.

Having, therefore, given in his name as a candidate for baptism our Jerome passed on to his examinations. There were seven examinations held to test candidates in their firmness of belief in the faith and renunciation of the devil, the world, and its vanities. All the saints from St. Dionysius the Areopagite to St. Clement Pope mention this holy and necessary ceremony of the examinations as being of apostolic tradition, and as having been taught by Jesus Christ Himself Who said that unless a man renounces all that he possesses he cannot become His disciple; for no

[1] *Epist.* 61. [2] August. cap. 12, lib. *De Cura pro Mortuis.*
[3] Leo Papa, *Epist.* 4, 5, 6.

man can serve two masters which are so contrary to one another—God and the World,—albeit that lay Christians of our time pretend that it can be done, despite that Christ Himself says it cannot be done. Frequently does our Father mention this ceremony, and in a more especial manner does he speak concerning it when commenting on the last words of the sixth chapter of Amos where he says: "Unless evil works die within us, Christ will not rise in us either, for only when we are dead to sin shall we possess Him for our guide. For this reason in the 'mysteries' (for thus did they style the sacrament of baptism) we first renounce Him who hath power over the West, and with him put to death sin in us, and, turning to the East, we enter into our engagement, taking the oath to abide by the Sun of Justice, promising to serve Him."

From these words is pointed out to us another ceremony which was then in use, namely the custom which the newly baptized observed of turning their backs to the West to pray, so that their faces should thus be looking to the East, in order to give us to understand that in every sense of the word the back must be turned on sin, which custom, however, is not now in use; nor that one which he mentions when commenting on Isaias, and in other places, which was that of giving to newly-baptized persons milk and honey to eat in sign that they were new creatures in Christ. And whereas some of these ceremonies not being universal nor of apostolic tradition, as were others, but only observed in some few special churches, they fell into disuse, similarly as that most renowned ceremony, of which some memory still remains, which was of vesting the newly baptized in white garments from Holy Saturday, when the baptism had taken place, until Low Sunday. This practice the saint mentions several times, more especially in two of his letters written

from the desert of Chalcidia to Pope Damasus, wherein he informs him very touchingly that he had clothed himself in the robe of Christ in Rome, and that it was but in reason that from Rome should be sent him the food of the spirit, since it was there that he had received the new life of the soul; by these words alluding, like a good philosopher, to the natural principle which teaches that from the causes whence a thing springs of the same does it maintain itself. This is in truth no small title-deed for Rome to claim this saint as her own, since the Christian's native land is rather where he is born again of the new Adam which is Christ, than of the country of the old Adam, where he was born of his natural parents. So vividly did all these holy ceremonies remain impressed in his thoughts, and so fittingly did these white garments become his body and soul, in which he was clothed on his great birthday, that sooner than soil them or spot their whiteness, as is said of the ermine, he would have allowed himself to be subjected to untold torments.

In those early times of the Church it was customary to delay baptism for some time, and not unfrequently until a person had attained to manhood he did not receive baptism. This was done, not because among Christians and those well instructed in the evangelical doctrines there existed an objection to children being eligible for baptism at any time after birth, because on this point there was never a doubt, as the same doctor himself teaches[1] in the third book against the Pelagians, and all the other saints and many councils[2] declare as being of apostolic tradition which has been handed down from the beginning,[3] and of no less authority than if it had been written. Nevertheless, notwithstanding that many parents who were faithful, and

[1] Lib. 3, *Contra Pelag.* c. 6. [2] Triden. ses. 6, can. 12.
[3] Milen. can. 2. Gerund. can. 5.

even saintly persons, yet they did not baptize their children, nor did they themselves, after arriving at an age when they knew well what they were about, demand baptism, rather they deferred it for a long time, for what reason it is not easy to account. Without doubt they were moved by various aims, because good and saintly men and such as had most pious parents, like St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Ambrose, Basil, Augustin, and others of whom we have grave and positive histories, did defer baptism, and put it off until they were of full age, and received it only after being many years catechumens, with this consideration, viz., that it was necessary for so high and great a sacrament to possess an exalted and lofty state of virtue, and to be well advanced and practised in all the virtues demanded by Christian perfection. "Because," as St. Chrysostom[1] says, "if it be necessary in order to dye cloth an imperial purple to steep the wool in various tints first, and then in the purple dye so that the cloth should acquire the perfect hue of colour desired, so also is it necessary for the perfection and the attainment of the exalted height of the Christian life, which exceeds in sanctity and purity all other states in the world, not to trust the soul ere it has been exercised, and, as it were, been dyed first as wool by the practice of the moral virtues which form the firm foundation of a state, which can be raised to so lofty a height." St. Augustine to the same purpose is fired with wrath, and with his divine genius puts forth many arguments against such as with little or no preparation, or provision of virtues, nor sorrow for their past sins and life, should dare to receive baptism, and censures bishops and parish priests, who admitted to so divine a mystery men of ill-regulated lives, merely on their word that they were members of the faithful, and that they believed in Jesus Christ.

[1] Homil. 1 in Acta.

From these extracts will be gathered that the reason the saints had for deferring baptism was on account of the reverence in which they held this high state, and the great respect and fear they judged necessary for entering into so holy and saintly a life. These considerations undoubtedly influenced the Christian parents of our doctor in delaying the baptism of their son, and likewise urged them to send him at so early an age to Rome, in order that he should be there well instructed in the faith, and adorned by saintly habits, be made competent to practise much discipline, and rendered fit to receive the various tints so firmly, that he should attain to being steeped in the perfection of the Christian purple. Others, however, let us say here, did not act with such good motives, but delayed receiving baptism until they were far advanced in life, or indeed until they were at the very gates of death, similarly to the neglectful Christians of these times, who wait to do penance when they should be making their wills, and by the judgment of God do neither the one nor the other; nor can any one be found to convince them that they are dying, or persuade them to confess. Thus it came to pass in those days that many died without baptism, as occurred to the Emperor Valentinian, the Younger, of whom St. Ambrose affirms, that he did not lose the grace he hoped for in baptism, on account of the true penance and good dispositions, which supplied with the spirit the want of water for receiving the sacrament he desired. In many other cases, without doubt, this did not end with such happy results in punishment of their neglect; and in endeavouring to remedy this, many fell into a greater error, which was, that the dead were baptized in the person of their friends, or they left a recommendation to them, founding this act on a false interpretation given to those words of St. Paul, where, writing

to the Corinthians,[1] he says: '*Otherwise what shall they do, that are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not again? Why, then, are they baptized for them?*' And St. Epiphanius,[2] writing against Cerinthus, says "that this was the practice in Asia and in Galatia." St. Chrysostom, when expounding this passage of the Apostle, recounts concerning this practice which he with good reason calls worthy of scorn and derision, that, among the other errors and abuses which sprang up from the heresy and sect of the *Marcionites*, was the following one: "When a person died unbaptized a living man would lie under the bed of the dead man, and when the corpse was approached and asked whether he desired baptism, he, being dead and therefore unable to reply, the man concealed beneath the bed would reply for him, and the dead man was then baptized, and that this is what St. Paul alludes to when he says, '*What shall they do, that are baptized for the dead?*' "To such a degree," says the saint, "does the craft of the devil work on the souls of the ignorant." To St. Epiphanius it appears a fair exposition of this passage that, when a man is near his end, and at the point of death, if he had been already instructed in the faith, he can be baptized, and that this may mean the words *being baptized for the dead.* It is, however, the opinion of others, that St. Paul here speaks of those, who do penance for the souls of the departed, and that he speaks of baptism as though it were the same as a work of satisfaction; but I cannot see how this agrees with the intention and words of the Apostle. And, whereas it be not outside the purpose of history, I will state what others again say, who in my opinion judge in respect to this text what is just in regard to the dignity of so great a master. Here he propounds a grave argument to prove the resurrection of the dead

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 29. [2] *Epipn. heres.* 28. Homilia 40.

gathered from the secret mystery of the baptism of Jesus Christ, where the dipping beneath the water and bringing forth of the baptized signified death, life, resurrection, and burial. In the blissful first ages of the Church it happened that some of the faithful, previous to being baptized, visibly received the Holy Ghost, as was witnessed with Cornelius and all those of his household, for, ere St. Peter had concluded his discourse, the Holy Spirit had descended on them and had given them the gift of tongues.

By this was clearly seen that they had died to sin and had risen, as regards the souls of all those, who had thus received the Spirit, and that these had been dead, despoiled of that life, wherein they had first lived to sin, and were now risen to a new life in Christ. Hence St. Paul asks: '*Tell me, these that were dead to sin, why were they afterwards baptized? What death or what life do they possess in that baptism?*' For seeing they be men so holy and so enlightened by the Holy Ghost they perform naught without reason and without mystery, it is evident that they confess and profess not only that they died with Christ, and that they have risen with Him, as regards the soul, but that they also await another death, and another resurrection of the body, which they profess by receiving baptism, entering into and coming forth out of the water. Hence two lives and two deaths are there prefigured, and in the cause also the effects are contained: as regards him who has already died and lived in the one, it becomes necessary that he profess the other, and were there no resurrection of the dead and of the body, there would be nothing left for them to profess. This is what is taught us by the Church in her creed, when she bids us say: "I confess one baptism for the remission of sins, and I expect the resurrection of the dead." This is the explanation.

But let us return again to the case of those who delayed receiving baptism through carelessness or negligence. I say that of this number some were led by a wrong interpretation of other words of the same Apostle[1] when in his Epistle to the Hebrews he says as follows: '*It is impossible for those, who were once illuminated, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have, moreover, tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and are fallen away, to be renewed again to penance, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making Him a mockery.*' They understood this passage as though the Apostle had said that he who, after being baptized, should sin mortally, had no means of returning to the grace of God, nor of doing penance; and hence they did not wish to be baptized until the point of death. With this false interpretation did a priest of Rome called "Novatus" deceive many. This ignorant innovator and explainer of holy Scripture, not knowing that the same St. Paul, who had said the above, had, nevertheless, received to penance the incestuous man of the city of Corinth; and that in the case of the Galatians, who had been seduced and led away by the teaching of a false gospel, he caused them to be spiritually born again by reason of the penance they performed, as is very clearly described, and the error refuted by the great Athanasius in an Epistle he addressed to Serapion. What the Apostle meant to say in this place he himself declares subsequently in cap. xi. of the same letter where he says: "By wilfully sinning after we have received the clear tidings of the truth, there no longer remains to us a sacrifice for sin. There only awaits us a terrible judgment and sentence of fire, which will burn and consume the adversaries." Because, if any one broke the

[1] Heb. vi.

Law of Moses, and it was proved by two or three witnesses, he irrevocably died; how much greater punishment would he deserve who should despise the Son of God, not esteeming His blood any more than that of a base animal, by whose blood he had been sanctified, or he should offer so great an affront to the Spirit of grace which he had received? And these first words, "wilfully sinning," have great emphasis and mystery.

The same does St. John say in his first epistle,[1] and St. Peter in his second one,[2] and these are the two places of which the same prince of the apostles declares that they have been debased by the ignorant, who, to their own perdition, comprehend or interpret them in a false sense; not only this, but even the rest of the holy Scriptures, as was the case with the miserable Novatus, who denied the remedy of the sacrament of penance to the faithful. And forasmuch as I do not exercise here the office of exponent, but that of an historian, I will not digress any longer to offer further information on these texts, but simply limit myself to giving the causes why the Gentiles of those days delayed baptism. Others there were who, although they did not carry things so far, nor were blinded by this error, yet put off their baptism from a cowardly idea, lest they should offend our Lord after receiving it more grievously; holding the sins committed previous to baptism in lesser account than those committed after receiving the sacrament. Forasmuch as after baptism they called themselves not only sinners from henceforth, but "transgressors," as St. Paul calls sinners[3] who after receiving the law break it, on account of the gravity which that state demands by reason of the ingratitude shown for the benefit received, for the faith and oath taken which has been broken; and therefore they judged that by delaying in this way to be baptized

[1] St. John i. 3. [2] St. Peter ii. 2. [3] Rom.

to avoid all these things, live with greater liberty and less scruples, less notice being taken by others of their lives, and moreover, they chose for themselves when and where they should be baptized. Against such base thoughts as these, such abuses of grace, and mean correspondence with God, very skilfully does St. Gregory Nazianzen in an eloquent oration dispute to the purpose, saying as follows: "You may tell me you do not receive baptism because you fear your bad inclinations, and the evil propensities with which our nature leans to what is evil and pursues vice. A fine excuse covered by cowardice! But listen to a brief solution. Tell me, oh you, who are so afraid of sin, which of the two do you judge lives the holier and more blameless a life—he who does not sin or he who lives in sin? If you reply—and as is true—that it is he who does not sin, then why do you fear to receive baptism, if even before baptism you keep so diligently what the divine law ordains? And if, perchance, your life be not pure and innocent, you do not guard against what may defile you; if you continue a long time in your evil course, and have grown hardened in sinful customs, it is clearly manifest that you await the last hour of life to receive baptism and in that moment depart this life! This is a pestilential fraud, not of property, nor of gold, but of sin, seeking to reap a profit by the same fraud, by which you pretend to sanctify and purify the soul." And at the end of the discourse he adds: "He who receives the purifying cleansing bath of this regeneration is like to a new soldier who has as yet performed no brave deed, but who sits down beneath the standard having been in no encounter, nor broken into any skirmish, nor having even confronted the enemy. Neither by merely clothing himself in the uniform of a soldier, and being clad in coat of mail and armed with a sword, will he be held valiant and

brave, nor could he have the right to approach to speak with the captain, as though he were an experienced soldier, who had been already proved, nor would he dare to ask favour or concessions like those who have gone through regular engagements. In the same way you who are but recently baptized, how can you think that you will enter with the saints into a participation of the crowns and the recompense of their victories until you should have by the faith you profess first fought and braved all manner of affronts and dangers, having resisted with brave heart and courageous will the encounters of the flesh and the combats of the devil?"

The divine Chrysostom, treating this same subject with the eloquence of his golden mouth, among other reasons he advances, says as follows: "You fear to approach baptism! Did you in truth fear this holy sacrament you would receive it and lovingly cherish it. Yet for that reason you will at once add, 'I do not receive it because I do not fear it.' But tell me do you not fear to die in this state.' 'God is most merciful,' you will say, 'and would not permit such a thing.' Very well, then, go and receive baptism if you find that God is so humane and merciful. What a strange being you must be! That which you should hasten to attend to, viz., to receive baptism, you put off, casting in oblivion the mercy of God, and you only bear in mind the dread it causes you; yet, when desirous of delaying baptism you resort to this mercy! You follow a reverse way in everything; because he that is not baptized knows not how great is the mercy of God; whilst he that by receiving baptism places himself in His hands, and for love of Him has renounced all things, although he may again fall into sin, nevertheless, provided he truly repents, at once experiences in himself the divine mercy. Whosoever desires to go further into

the matter and find the reasons urged and added here by the said saint, may read what he says, because for my purpose I have merely sought to discover the various motives why in those times baptism was deferred by various classes; because in this present happy age of the Church, when all truths have been so deeply investigated, and those first usages put away, I deem them of small need. The most wholesome and safe course has been now well established, which is, that children should be baptized without awaiting a more mature age, both for the reason put forward by St. Dionysius Areopagite, at the end of his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, wherein he teaches that children from their tenderest age should be invested with the sacraments, in order that from their earliest years Christ should converse with them. In this way afford no opportunity for any other life to be imprinted on them but the divine life, and ever contemplate it; as well as because without doubt the devil then is possessed of lesser powers, and does not take possession of their bodies and souls, as he does in such as have not that divine life. Because, as by original sin they are his captives, he deals with them with greater liberty; as has been explained by the angelic doctor,[1] and as by experience we are taught what illusions and mockings evil spirits will work where they find small frequentation of the sacraments, and how far exiled they are from the places where the sacraments are dispensed and venerated.

Hence, our saint came forth, a youth out of the baptismal font, newly born in Christ, divested of the skin of the ancient serpent, and, as he himself says, vested with Christ and Christ vested in him, made a living member of Him, no longer of earthly nature but of the celestial one, regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost. If

[1] St. Thom. 4. d. q. 5, art. 1.

any one wishes to read, in a brief manner, the glories of baptism in choice language let him peruse the Epistle which the great Father[1] wrote to his friend Oceanus, and his desire will be fulfilled.

[1] *Ad Oceanum*, cap. 3.

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

On the Purity and the Virginity which St. Jerome preserved during his Life

MANY as have been the men of learning and of renown who up to the present time have treated or written concerning this glorious Father, as well as popular tradition and the accepted opinion of pious persons, all have affirmed that St. Jerome was a true virgin, because by all authorities has his life been held to have been so strict and so modest of habit that they do not hesitate to declare that he guarded perfect purity and that the white stole and the spotless robe wherein he was vested when he entered the militia of Christ were never stained.

When the High Priest entered to offer sacrifice before the Lord in the city of Israel, among other ornaments and apparel with which he was vested was that of a tunic of whitest linen, woven in such a way that there were distributed many small eyes in the manner of table linen, which at the present day we call damask or embroidery. God wished by this apparel to demonstrate that he who should be called to the priesthood and be master of his people (since this was the principal office—that of declaring the law, as He says by the mouth of a prophet) must lead a life of great innocence and purity, and that in order to guard this virtue he must not sleep, but must remain with his eyes wide open, and these to be a thousand. If God

sets such account of the integrity of the symbol, what shall we say of the reality of the thing signified? And, when God created Jerome to be so great a doctor and priest of His Church, who will dare to say He did not vest him with this *Ephod* (for so this tunic is called in the original language)? And the retirement and the fears which are seen throughout the life of this Father, when he fears even the very smallest thoughts and can find no assurance, who does not perceive that these are the eyelets of this pure white garment? Nevertheless, albeit that this is the case, the persecutors of virtue will not allow the bones of the saints to rest in peace. There are authors who, founding their opinion, although deceitfully and evilly, state that our saint lost his virginal purity, on the words which I shall quote in truth and to the letter. In the first of all his Epistles, writing to Heliodorus, he says as follows: "Consider, my brother, that it is not lawful to hold or possess anything of your property." *He who does not renounce* (says the Lord) *all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple.* "Tell me, why are you a Christian with so timid a heart? Consider how Peter leaves his net; consider how Matthew rises up from his table at the exchange and becomes an apostle; the Son of Man has nowhere to rest His head, yet you are tracing out and measuring wide gates and luxurious apartments. If you place your hopes on the things of the world you will fail to be heir with Christ. Explain the name of monk, for by this are you called. What will you do amid the multitude and the bustle bearing the name of solitary? I do not give you this advice as one who has not tested the dangers of the waves, or one who escaped with the ship or the merchandise safely to the shore; but as a skilled mariner, who, having now come out of the shipwreck on to the sands, with fearful voice, warns those who newly

attempt the sea. There, indeed, is sucked in and drawn to the fire of the luxurious Charybdis the salvation of the soul; here the deceitful Scylla, with the face of a young damsel, flattering with false laughter, in order to wreck chastity. Here is the sea-shore of a barbarian people bereft of reason; here the Corsair devil with his allies binds with strong chains those whom he captures. Do not act lightly: do not be trustful; do not judge yourself secure, although the sea should appear to be calm and invite you, and the wind scarcely moves the hair of your head. Be it known to you that in this plain there are high mountains, and within is a great peril concealed; within is the enemy in ambush; tighten the cords, spread out the sails, place the mark of the Cross on your foreheads; this is a tempest rather than a calm." This is the first quotation, and one of the testimonies which may be brought against the saint in order to affirm that in his youth he had lost his virginal purity! Here we have the picture of a routed individual, his merchandise lost, the apparel cast to the sea thrown up by the waves, engulfed by Scylla, swallowed up by Charybdis, flung on the sands, and as much else as may be desired. Had he not discovered to us in the Epistle which follows directly after this one, which is addressed to Nepotian, what the eloquent orator means, we ourselves should remain fearing this tempest; but in the first instance he there confesses in this Epistle that he wished to test his genius and play with many metaphorical and rhetorical colours. And even should he not have made this statement, any one—unless he were very blind or very malicious—would at once perceive this, because in this is easily revealed his soul and intent. Here he acts the part of one, who is experienced and the master; his aim is to persuade his friend to love the life of solitude. He places before him

the dangers of the world, and beneath the metaphor with its most elegant allegory he describes the variety of sins, warning him of the common danger—waves, winds, quicksands, shoals, false and fair winds, deceitful prosperities, vain favours, despair, sadness, persecutions; on the other part Scylla, Charybdis, pirates, bad ports, encounters, captivities, prisons, vices of the flesh, sensuality, pride, evil intentions, wretched aims, the sad effects of all these miseries! Let us, then, say with these grave censors that of all this is Jerome full; so many evils were admitted in so good a soul, because he does not bewail one thing more than the other.

The skilful mariner—as he here depicts him to us, who from such grave dangers was able safely to land on the shore—was not swallowed up by Charybdis, nor was he deceived by Scylla; he was not captured by pirates, nor did he sink in the shoals. He fought with all; he was attacked; he was beseiged, persecuted; but his dexterity, his spirit, and bravery carried him through, despite the ill-treatment he was subjected to, and brought him alive to land, for so is it necessary that those should be tried, who have to be masters of all. And let this passage serve us to understand in all we may say farther on on this subject, because without blemish he endured in patience all these trials; he was in the extreme the warrior saint. God permitting him to be tried—tried in all things—because he that has to be so masterly a general must need be experienced; and, as the Apostle[1] says of our only High Priest and Preceptor, tempted "like to us in all things, but without sin." Not in such a high degree certainly, but according to his measure, in His way, as far as can be in a fragile vase which contains so precious a treasure; and the fact of having no evidence of the victory renders us

[1] Hebrews vi.

uncertain of what passes in secret, God concealing His favours for a greater good, as we shall see farther on, in order that souls should not be elated with the victories, and forasmuch as this manner of life is more secure, being hidden in Christ. We have no further intention of commenting in this place, because even the one who most feels on this subject[1] could not find in this passage an occasion to exhibit his malice. Let us then proceed to more clear statements. When commending to his two friends, Chromatius and Eusebius, the care of his sister, he says:[2] "I may well state that my sister is as a new fruit produced in Christ by the skill of our saintly Julian; he planted it, do you both cultivate it, for God will give the increase. This fruit has been given me (as though a new thing) by Jesus Christ, after the enemy had wounded her soul so badly, by bringing her from death to life, for which reason 'I am fearful of even what is most secure' (as the poet says). You are well aware, my friends, how slippery and prone is the state of youth for falls; in it I fell, and you yourselves did not pass that period without great fears; she commences to enter it, and so she has great need of being assisted by many counsels, admonished by many warnings, and needs sustaining by much comforting: I mean to ask that with your saintly letters you give her frequently advice and inspire her with courage. And, whereas charity suffers all things, I pray you very earnestly to induce Bishop Valerian also to write to her to this purpose, and encourage her, since you are well aware how greatly the minds of young women are restrained and encouraged when they perceive that persons of such distinction are watchful for them."

This, indeed, is a very powerful confession of St. Jerome's, since he clearly states that he fell in his

[1] Erasmus.

[2] *Epist.* 43.

youth, and for the purpose of what he says he declares the condition of his fall! I do not know how they can fall into this error, unless from being so experienced; these authors are capable of anything. Now, I ask, from what do they infer that, when a saint says, "I also am weak and miserable, and have had many falls, and often fell when a young man,"—that, for that reason, he states that he lost his virginity? Most certainly, if we follow such a rigid argument, we shall declare that there is not a single virgin left, because which of the saints will say that he did not fall? Since they judged all things to be of mortal danger, who is there that does not perceive this? And how many manners of falling may not be found in that state? Of the just, the sacred Scriptures tell us, he falls seven times each day, yet with all these many falls he does not lose the name of just; but here they require that Jerome after one fall should lose that inestimable jewel!

By this line of reasoning they might also condemn the Apostle of the Gentiles, who, after having been a "vessel of election," and having carried through the world that precious name of salvation, was made a captive in the bands of concupiscence, because he says that the laws of the nobler part of the soul are made captive to the laws of sin. If the humble and consoling words of the saints are to be received and understood in so crude a point, we shall have no saint left, and this seems to be the aim of those who so read them. Let us hear what St. Basil declares in a book he wrote on True Virginity,[1] where he says what we have already declared as regards these men, that they would wish to minimise in the saints this virtue of purity! "Let no one think," he says, "that, if the body be that of a virgin it follows that the soul is that of a virgin likewise; it may be that the body is pure, yet interiorly the

[1] Basil, *De Vera Virginit.*

soul may not be so. A bold, unguarded look puts the soul on its guard against what was not seen by pure eyes. Words whispered tenderly in the ear to touch the heart corrupt and deflower it. From this is at once inferred—if in the soul purity is lost, what reason have we to declare that the body still retains that virtue?" I do suspect that from these words of the saint occasion has been taken for saying that sentence commonly ascribed to St. Basil: "I never knew woman, yet I do not thereby judge myself to be a virgin."

In the same manner does our doctor express himself when writing to the virgin Eustochium: "If those who are emaciated, shut up in the deserts, endure so many battles of the flesh solely with their thoughts, what shall we say of the battles which a young damsel is exposed to, who is placed in such luxury?" Let us, according to this reasoning, reckon this saint among the dead, for, according to the unappealable sentence of these rigid censors of virginity, she is lost!

In order that this be better understood, I should like to ask those, who so darkly interpret the language of the saints, were we to lay hold of one of those, who so earnestly are striving to be servants of God, such as Jerome, and endeavouring with all the strength of their souls to love some signal virtue, praise him as being well exercised and excelling in it, or let him imagine that we knew he prided himself on possessing such a virtue, what would the saint say in that case? Would he take pride in this? Would he take occasion to glorify himself in this virtue, although he might be distinguished for it? Most certainly he would not; rather, with troubled countenance and eyes cast down, he would excuse himself with the best reasoning he could find in order not to speak falsehood to men or show himself ungrateful to God. Thus did Jerome act,

who, being the learned man he was, came out of this difficulty in a humble, honourable manner. "I have not," he said, "that which you deem I so greatly extol, because I see myself so experienced in it; rather do I marvel when I see those who possess it. But let no one be deceived with flattery and praises, because there are two virginities, which follow two births, the one of the flesh, and the other of the spirit; and whereas the one fights against the other, we oftentimes see ourselves cast down by the law of the flesh, doing what we do not wish to do." Which is equal to saying more clearly: Although, in the body, I am a virgin, yet in the spirit I do not know whether I am because I know not how I come out of those combats, and of the encounters which the flesh makes against the spirit; and I marvel greatly at those who have this virginity, for they are like pure white doves who soar aloft above this earth, whilst I see myself attached to it. This appears to me to be the secret and native meaning of this quotation. Because, when I behold how carefully the saints view their defects, how they withdraw from themselves the consideration of their virtues, and how readily they accuse themselves of the smallest defect, I am inclined to believe of them the contrary of what their words would seem to convey; and in some manner God is desirous that they be revealed and made manifest, as is seen by this text, which, if it be not understood in this manner, would have no meaning. The saints esteem being humble more than being virgins, because virginity may be found together with pride, but not humility; for having humility, all else remains secure. Hence this perfectly agrees with that sentence of St. Bernard,[1] who affirms that God was more won by the humility of His holy mother than by her virginity.

[1] Bern. *Hom. Sup. Missus est.*

Indeed the love and force of this virtue has so powerfully acted on the saints that it induces them to do and to say things apparently far from reason and from truth, although in them is found no deficiency of reason or of truth. From this comes what is said of them that oftentimes it appears as though they spoke not the truth, yet they never lie! St. Paul calls himself the least of the apostles, unworthy to bear that name! St. John the Baptist declares he is no prophet! The one was so great an apostle, the other the greatest of the prophets! Yet neither the one nor the other lied, because on the occasions when they said this they considered what they were in themselves and of themselves, and whereas they found nought but poverty, without looking upon what they held from God, judging it to belong to another master, they hesitate not to cast themselves down and attribute to themselves all the evils, which may be expected from so corrupt a principle. They consider, on the contrary, the good in others, what benefits they received from God, and prostrate on the ground acknowledge those gifts, and in the sense and rule in which they walk, without duplicity or hypocrisy, they humble themselves down to the most abject ones of the earth, holding themselves to be even worse than they are, not as regards outward deeds, but in that fear of being ungrateful for the benefits received and for that which they clearly see on their part is struggling to come out! From whence we may well affirm that, in spite of what St. Jerome may say that he was not a virgin either in body or in soul (and it is easier to affirm the first than the second), we are not bound to believe him either in regard to the first or to the second, because we have already seen the way in which the humble speak; and the more so when we remember how God does not allow them to keep silent for long, affording them occasions to reveal

the truth, as was witnessed in St. Paul and in the Baptist, who confessed by word and by deed what to all appearances they had denied, and the same thing also happened to our saint, as we shall see farther on.

St. Augustine declares a grave thing when, speaking to this purpose, he says: "I dare to affirm that to the proud virgin it is no small benefit to fall from that purity, in order that with the fall he may humble himself in that which he was proud of."[1] And in his books *De Civitate Dei* he affirms, that, if the Lord permitted the virgins of Rome to be corrupted by the barbarian Goths, it was in order to humble them in their haughtiness, or from that which should spring from it, should they respect it as a sacred thing. Virginity is a high and sovereign virtue, which lifts up a man to a state, which is more than human, and therefore it is necessary to conceal it with timidity, in order that there should not happen to them what occurred to the sons of Israel in Egypt, when Pharaoh, on becoming aware that a male child was born, ordered that it should be slain. In the same way does the tyrannical evil spirit act in ourselves, for with pride he seeks to destroy the manly virtues, which spring up in our souls. The remedy is to hide them. This is taught us by Jerome as by one who, knowing the figure well, conceals his virginity, and without falsehood denies the birth of the Israelite within his house. Because, as there is no greater war made than that which sensuality wages against virgins, the saint is full of fear lest, without being aware of it, death may have taken place within his own doors. "The enemy," says the angelic Doctor on the Master of the sentences,[2] "awakens in the flesh of virgins a natural curiosity with ardent desires to experience what

[1] Aug. *De verb. Dom. secundum Joan.*, homil. 53, tom. 10; Aug. *De Civitat. Dei*, Book 2, c. 28.

[2] S. Thom. 4, d. 49. q. 5. art. 3. g. 1. 1.

the imagination, falsely moved by the appetite, represents to them in the form of an extreme delight, far greater without comparison than what it can be in reality." This great doctor speaks from experience, for he was a virgin; and, if any saint on earth was tried in this respect, it was undoubtedly Jerome, because as we shall see later in our narrative in the midst of the most rugged and inhabitable desert this enemy would represent to him in more vivid form than if he actually saw them the bands of Roman maidens and their dances; and he declares that he dreaded even his own little cell, and dared not enter it, fearing that the very walls themselves should know his thoughts. From one who is thus tempted, and to whom is put the question—whether he be a virgin or not, what answer can he be expected to give?

It must needs be that one should be like the saints to comprehend the language of the saints, because in that they do they appear mad to the world, as well as in the things they say, and were we to judge them rigorously by the words they utter, very few indeed would be canonised in the Church. St. Basil confesses[1] that, as man, he cannot deny that he is full of faults and errors. St. Gregory Nazianzen, in his verses, after acknowledging that in the body he has been a virgin, says, that as to his mind he is not so in soul—thus speak both master and disciple. St. Bernard, in one of his sermons, says:[2] "There was a time when that cruel enemy subjected my body to his tyranny, powerfully ruling all my members, dragging them into his service; and the great havoc he worked then can be seen even now in the scars left by that havoc." And in another sermon,[3] he says: "Be joyful ye that never stained the white garment, and can glory

[1] Basil, *Epist.* 77.

[2] Bern., serm. de Assump. Virgin.

[3] Bern., serm. de Virg. Maria.

with our heavenly Queen in the privilege of virginity, that virtue, which in me has perished, now there is not even breath left to reattain it; I impoverished myself on my dung-heap; I am made like a beast."

In this way we might quote something of every one of the saints, yet with regard to many their virginity was never placed in doubt, nor are their words to be taken in the literal sense as having lost it. And the reason why this has been commented upon in our saint is, because those, who found fault and criticised his epistles and books, found those self-humiliations which are to be found in all the saints' witness, and so they corrupted the meaning of his saintly words. And this reason works in me so firmly that it urges me to hold as evidence the very contrary to what they feel themselves; forasmuch as St. Jerome is in an extreme degree given to humility, and to attribute faults to himself and to deny what is good in himself or to conceal it, disguise and minimise it—and, what is more, to call the defects of others his own. When relating in an Epistle to Julian how Heliodorus had quitted the desert, whose solitude both had embraced, Jerome, not wishing to subject his friend to any reproach of levity, blames himself for the fault, saying: "Here lived the holy brother Heliodorus who, wishing to reside along with me in the desert, has at last departed, driven away by my evil doings." If this is to be understood as it is expressed, when it was altogether different, what can we say of this glorious Father? And whereas it is clearly seen that in the sense of these words he is speaking in modesty as well as what in another part he says, when describing the cause of this departure, it is evident that we must do the same in our statement, and that if he says he praises that virginity which he has not, it proceeds from the same root, for he subsequently reveals the

contrary. Let us, therefore, hear him when he speaks truthfully of himself, and what he feels when he deems he speaks in security. When writing to the holy virgin Eustochium,[1] to whom, as to a most pure dove, he manifested his secrets, for in truth she was worthy of such honour and privilege by reason of her sanctity and prudence, he expresses himself in this manner: "Not only do we praise virginity and extol it, but we likewise observe it in our daily lives, because it does not suffice to know what is good, unless we guard with care that which we hold as such, for that appertains to the understanding and this to the deed and the work; the first is common and known by many, the second is for the few; he that perseveres to the end will be saved; for many are called, but few are chosen!" Undoubtedly this passage proves more clearly that St. Jerome was a virgin than the others that he was not. This reason is a powerful one. St. Jerome says he was not a virgin, and again states that he was a virgin: if he was not a virgin and yet says that he was, it is an untruth and pride; whilst, if he was a virgin and denies it, this would be humility and Christian modesty—hence we must admit the affirmation of the latter and not the former. They would reply that the passage can be explained away and means something else. And let me ask, Have the other passages no explanation? Very well, then, let us come to the explanation, and let the first remark be on the first objection,[2] from which explanation we might very well urge that the Apostle St. James said in his Epistle,[3] "*Behold how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth? And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.*" And, in truth, such appears to be some of the explanations of this censor. He manifests it in this passage in which,

[1] *Epist.* 22.

[2] Erasmus in *Vita divi Hieronymi.*

[3] St. James iii. 5, 6.

scorning all others, he paraphrases in this manner:[1] "Not only do we praise Virginity but we even keep it, which means that we, moreover, teach it, and we give rules as to how that virtue should be guarded." This proves his intention: in the first place, because he states that it is a phrase very well known and elegant in the Latin tongue, and well expresses what we say that we keep well that which we give rules for guarding. Secondly, because the title of the letter expresses it, which is *De Virginitate servanda*, that is to say, a letter which teaches how to preserve virginity; and lastly, because the coherence and the thread of the letter consists in publishing it, and it cannot be understood otherwise.

Let us, therefore, attack this exponent with this last reason itself. Let us see, in conformity with his exposition, how the text runs, and what connection it carries. Not only do we praise (says the text) virginity, but we even give rules in order to guard it. Following this exposition, let us add the rest, and we shall see how it fits in, or rather how it destroys the text; because it does not suffice to know what is good, unless with great care we guard what is held as such. To which must be added the exposition, "unless it is guarded in others," whence the absurdity is made patent, furthermore, by what directly follows; the former touches the understanding, and the latter the deed and the work; the first is common and is known to many, the second to the few; he only, who perseveres to the end, will be saved. Oh, thou new exponent, let me ask you, Which is it that touches the understanding? The giving of rules to preserve virginity, and how to treat and know the virtue, you will doubtless say. Then it is to deeds and to labour that appertains the preservation of the virtue, the former thing being of

[1] Erasmus in *Vita divi Hieron.* ect. in antidote hujus *Epist.* 22.

many, the latter for the few; and few are chosen for so lofty a virtue. Do you now perceive clearly the coherence and the reasoning, similarly to the word of St. Jerome, who preserves virginity, and not only extols it, which does not mean, nor can it mean, that he gives rules and teaches how to keep them, and in this way he keeps what is in others? Do you see how greatly you are worthy of pity and of derision? But let us come to your statement. When did you find in St. Jerome, or in any other author, who knew Latin, such a manner of speech? It might well be said of Seneca, and of Aristotle, and of other noted philosophers, who disputed on all the virtues, that, because they gave admirable rules for acquiring them, they practised those virtues? You are so desirous of depriving the saints of their virtues that, in order to do so, you counterfeit new phrases in the Latin tongue? The title of the Epistle is the *Guarding of Virginity*, and not its praises, for this was the new road which the saint chose, different from that taken by Tertullian, Ambrose, and Damasus; hence what he teaches is truth; but the rules he gives he has taken from experience, from his own labour, from his continual circumspection, from his perseverance in combating; for all this regards the few, and thus he states, for example, in many of his epistles: "And he can do so without arrogance, because he is speaking as to a loved daughter, and he tempers it in such sort that he rather attempts to manifest his own weakness than to demonstrate his virtues." This is the first exposition!

Now let us take the second, and let us leave the court of critics to finish arguing this dispute on behalf of our saint against the author, who, witnessing how far he goes from reason, says to him as follows:[1] "What do

[1] Marianus in *Vita divi Hieronymi.*

you seek? What do you suppose? What are you inquiring about? For how can it be declared in clearer terms or by a more manifest testimony that St. Jerome was a virgin than by the words which he himself speaks?" Whereas others saw that this did not agree, and that the coherence and the letter and what was so lauded and repeated made the explanation of no value, they attempted to explain the distinction between the first virginity and the second, of the first birth and the second one, as we have stated above. They say that he declares in the former passages the loss of the first virginity, and the virginity of the second birth is what he clearly states he did not only praise but that he also keeps; because it matters little to know the good, if it is not held and possessed. This is a subtle and skilled distinction for those, who do not see how out of purpose they are to treat the subject, and for those who are not aware that men so learned as Jerome, when they purpose to treat on a subject, do not transform or use equivocation in their words in a puerile manner, using the signification in a different way. The saintly doctor proceeds to treat learnedly, and with all propriety, the subject of virginity, which the Church and the saints and the entire world celebrates and lauds in pure and holy maidens, and was he to pass on without any purpose to treat in its severest point of the chastity of souls after baptism, which is a virtue that is found in souls after that sacrament even in such as were not chaste before receiving it? Moreover, it is a style of language, which is quite unusual, because who styles St. Augustine and St. Cyprian, or any of the saints, who had children before being baptized, virgins, because after their baptism they were most pure and saintly? Nor when indeed did any of them dare to attribute to themselves so great a title? No doubt such as say this do not advert that, strictly speaking, as

the dialecticians say, this word virgin and virginity in its force and value sounds as a purpose of not severing that corporal seal guarding in its purity body and soul; and in this sense does the saintly doctor proceed to write his Epistle, like one who well knows what it is to speak with propriety and metaphor: "Because the chastity of the soul and cleanness of heart is a general virtue, whose foundation and root is laid in charity and all the other theological virtues, which form the espousals of the soul and God; but that virtue, which directly looks to the things in which concupiscence becomes unbridled, in order to correct and hold them, this is properly styled chastity; to which, on adding a most firm purpose of abstaining perpetually from all sensible delectations, which are the matter of this form, there is induced a particular and, as it were, an angelic virtue, which is called virginity." This veil is so delicate that the saints always treat on it with great circumspection, and there are few, who dare to boast of its beauty, so much so that St. Augustine says[1] that the instant the thread of this perpetual purpose of guarding integrity is severed, this virtue becomes lost. And other doctors and saints so subtilly treat of this that they dare to affirm in their theology[2] that this crown (called aureole in their language), which is given in heaven to virgins, is not enjoyed, nor is it attained (even with a firm purpose), unless confirmed by vow. From this proceed the fears of the saints, and their circumspection; and from this likewise the thought of our saint to deny the possession of such a treasure.

But, in all truth, I do not see how before his baptism Jerome could have lost this virtue, as our adversaries by common consent assert. Because whoever examines the

[1] Aug. in lib. *De bono Conjugali.*

[2] St. Thom. 4. addit. q. 96, art. 5.

life the saintly youth led at that time in Rome—his great studies, his naturally holy inclinations, his tender age, his devotion in visiting the sepulchres and the cemeteries, wherein were laid the martyrs, his noble companions, holy and devout—how can it be imagined that he sustained such a fall, or what could have occasioned it? Who is not aware that, ere such a fall takes place, it is preceded long before by many failings and stumblings, induced by slothfulness, by evil company, and by sinful inclinations, and never suddenly?

Hence we have fully investigated (whether our adversaries be convinced or not) that both before and after being baptized Jerome was most chaste and pure, and that to say the contrary is a statement sprung from hearts of men of small minds, and who do not view or judge the question in a right manner.

BOOK THE SECOND

THIRD AGE—ADOLESCENCE

PROEM

We have briefly considered in the First Book the relation of the first and second periods of the life of St. Jerome—his infancy and boyhood—as far as we have been able to gather from his own writings. We now come to the third period or age, which is called adolescence. This age or period, which, according to the general opinion, works a perfect revolution during its course, begins at about the fifteenth year and extends to the twenty-first or twenty-second year of a man's life, when the full growth of the body is attained and his stature is set. Nature proceeds so rapidly during this period, and is so busy with that part of the soul, which philosophers call *vegetative*, with the object of concluding her work, that all that there is in man, and more especially what appertains to the part of reason, is entirely in a state of unquiet, and calculated to imperfectly exercise its office, and, as a consequence, not so free for undertaking things of purpose, yet ready for all that is amusing and inclined for the things of concupiscence.

Our saint commenced this third period of life in his fifteenth year, a number a thousand times sacred and holy in the Sacred Scriptures, as being one which enclosed in itself the mystery of the two Testaments, the New and the Old. Thus does St. Augustine teach us when he says, speaking of the Psalms, "The number of our years are seventy, in those that are strong, eighty,"

where it says: "Seventy and eighty make a hundred and fifty," and in this number a holy thing is manifested, because the Book of the Psalms is composed of this number. If seven and eight be added they make fifteen. Seven declares the Old Testament, and eight the New; the first on account of the observance of the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, and the latter, by reason of the eighth, which is the eternal rest of the Sunday, figured for all, and as though in its proper cause in the Resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Likewise, because the number of seven is a number, in which is revolved the whole course of life, and of the temporal things, which were promised the earthly men of the Old Testament; and the figure eight is, as it were, an already commenced possession of the land of the living in the person of the divine men of the New Testament, and of the law of grace."

This is told us by St. Augustine along with other things in respect to the number fifteen.

The illustration of this was brought to its loftiest point by our saintly doctor. Comprehending its mystery, enclosed in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, he teaches us that those fifteen days, during which St. Paul communicated with St. Peter in Jerusalem, symbolise a plenitude of science and a singular perfection of doctrine, because in the Psalter there are fifteen psalms, which are like fifteen steps, by which the just man ascends until he attains to stand up and appear in the presence of the Divine Majesty and enter into the courts of the House of the Lord, singing with a joyful voice. It was up this mystic number of steps that the King Ezechias mounted to receive the prodigious sign of an increase of life for fifteen years, returning, or like to the sun turning back from the gates of death. The most solemn feasts of

the Lord God of Israel commenced on the fifteenth day of the moon. This, says St. Jerome, was the number of years he had attained when he entered the third period or age, that of adolescence, a great sign of the plenitude of science he would attain. Because, when in the previous age, that of puberty, Jerome studied as we have seen human letters, and in them had become so proficient, now in the present age he lifts his soul to higher things, and having still to soar in his flight, which is no less than to enter into the knowledge of that sacred science, which is enclosed in the two Testaments, it becomes, as it were, necessary that he should cast all the blandishments of that period into the waters of the Deluge, mystically represented by the fifteen fathoms deep which rose above the highest parts of the earth. And that commencing to sing a new canticle he should rise step by step, following the fifteen stages of the courts of the Temple of One greater than Solomon until he should enter into the knowledge of that perfect wisdom, which leads to eternal salvation, prolonging it by the number of fifteen years, in order to enclose in itself not only what is measured by the temporal seven, but even what is comprehended by the eight of eternal duration.

To my mind this illustration fits the soul of our saint, and is well founded coming from the school of Pythagoras; for, wishing to afford us a knowledge of the composition, being, parts, and offices of the soul, they symbolised it by figures and numbers. They set a triangle of equal parts, and at the one point or angle of the triangle they placed the first cipher, that of *one*; along the sides they placed even numbers on one side, and odd numbers on the other; on the one side beneath the number 1 they put 2, under 2 they put 4, and at the base 8, and on the other side the odd numbers. These even numbers added together make

14, with the one at top 15; and in thus doing they seemed to think they revealed to us the rank, office, virtue, strength, and power of the soul. The soul is represented by the triangle with its three powers, defined by its three equal sides, or its three virtues or grades, viz. vital, animal, and rational; and in this third period or age, that of adolescence, the soul commences to manifest the fulness of its grades, performing works guided by the reason, and having the faculty of making use of those actions, which theologians and moral philosophers define as deliberate, and proper to manhood, springing from the power of the free will. That which unites at the top is indicative of what is superior to the Spirit as something which stands in a higher position than itself, contained in the highest simplicity, free of division or plurality, in one simple Being. Metaphysicians generally declare that all that we behold distributed, and, as it were, spread out amid the inferior things of virtue or perfection—all becomes joined together and made into One by superior virtue, without division, as far as its grades will allow, ascending from one to the other until united, merged without any manner of division or composition into the most simple nature of God! This is that most perfect union which above itself the soul contemplates; all else descends with some division, and is lower than the soul, and becomes multiplied. This is what is signified by the even numbers being placed along the sides of the triangle, such as are 2, 4, 8, which make up the sum of 14 of the material things, which are divisible. This is not the place to carry this reason to its completion, going beyond the limits of history; it suffices, therefore, to gather from the great sphere which begins to be revealed to us that which is to our purpose, viz. that our saint, at the period he is now entering on, has left behind him the two other past periods, like to one who gazes down far

below his feet at worldly things—material, puerile—and raises his eyes and the wings of his thoughts to that eternal unity, to the solid truth which never deceives; and, bidding adieu for ever to the number 14, places the goal of his desires in that union of 7 and 8, entering the school of both the Testaments, which is promised him in the inheritance of Him, who was not satisfied to sign it in the mystical blood of so many animals—forasmuch as it was of no effect for such lofty possessions—but who signed it with the blood of His own Son, and such as received Him He did not disdain to call His brethren.

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

After St. Jerome had received the Sacrament of Baptism he departed to France, to visit the learned Men there and to prosecute his Studies. He enters a Desert with Bonosus.

The holy youth Jerome, vested in his beautiful livery, the superior part of his soul, which is called mind, inflamed by a lively faith, a firm hope, an ardent charity; the inferior part, which is styled rational, adorned with varied discipline as we have said; the understanding enlightened and luminous, the will indoctrinated with holy customs, the body drilled from its earliest years to obey the spirit, the tongue exercised in expressing the thoughts conceived by the heart—he was minded to bend his steps towards studies of greater depth, to which his heart was impelling him with ardent desires. He endeavoured, therefore, in all earnestness to employ his whole self in the study of the sacred scriptures, and of that celestial philosophy which is enclosed in them; for it appeared to him (as he himself states in another part) that it was meet that a man whilst on earth should study that which is to be continued in Heaven. Our saint reflected in himself that the natural inclination, which is found in all men for acquiring science and knowledge, is never satisfied in the things here below, because inferior to the yearnings of the immortal

soul, and because also they possess in them better principles and the seeds of more lovely fruits, which urge them to investigate more precious treasures and secrets than those which nature hides in herself. He also considered how necessary it was to find a good method for pursuing such studies, in order to go over a long road in a short time, because in truth the longest life is but short to attain knowledge. He likewise perceived that among the great men, whose memories live, and which time is unable to efface, they followed two manners of proceeding. Some, in order to verify with accuracy what they learnt, sought to see with their own eyes what they had read, and to find these things, or at least find those who with a living voice might instruct them, and for this purpose undertook long voyages, unwilling to trust solely to books and written narratives. Others did not pursue so laborious a course, but by reading and pondering over strange writings which they had found, or by exchanging valuable documents with other students, contented themselves by elucidating what was more intricate and obscure—these were called in ancient times by the Hebrew title of *Scribes*, in the Latin *learned*, and in the Greek *Grammarians*, which titles, once so honourable, are now cast aside by the ignorance of the masses, like the dust under their feet. These great and noble men left imperishable memories of their genius, much wealth to future ages which have profited by their works, and a good and safe model for others to follow in their path; and, as the poet says,[1] despite the fact that they died and were laid to rest like other mortals, yet their fame brings them back to us in remembrance, and they live, so to speak, notwithstanding that they are dead. The path followed by the first, and the most difficult (although the

[1] Virg. *Aen.* 6.

surest for the purpose) did Jerome deem proper to choose, since it appeared to him—as in truth it was—that communion and intercourse with persons, and the actual, palpable knowledge of things and places, was a living power, a certitude, as it were, which those cannot have, who pursue the second road. The power and virtue, which the word carries with it when coming from the teacher, hearing the voice express the individual thought as it rises from the heart, is a living commentary, which is of greater advantage than that which we gather from the written page, similarly as the reality differs from the picture.

No one treated on this subject more bravely than did the doctor himself. Let us hear his own words as they occur in the epistle, which he wrote to Paulinus—words worthy of being the entrance-gate to the royal palace of the sacred scriptures. His words are as follows :—

"We read in ancient histories of men who have traversed provinces, who have visited new countries and peoples, who have navigated distant seas, solely to gaze on the features of those about whom they have read of in books." It would be too long were I to translate the whole quotation. Farther on he enumerates the various examples, to prove his assertion, of renowned men, such as Pythagoras, who went from Calabria to Egypt, to the city of Memphis; Plato, of whom he says that he went through the whole world following the trace of letters, which he imagined were slipping away from him. He went away from Athens, where he was universally held to be the master, to become a disciple in Egypt; from thence he returned to Italy, in order to study under Archytas of Tarentum, and while on the way fell into the hands of the Corsairs, and although he found himself a captive in the power of a tyrant as regards the body, yet his soul was

free to follow his gift of philosophy. He also brings forward, as an example, what is recounted of Livy, who, when dwelling in Rome, attracted by the force and fame of his eloquence great numbers of people from distant provinces; and those, who would not have been drawn by reason of the grandeur of Rome, were led thither by the sole desire to see one great man, and when entering into so famous a city sought in it no other object. This is confirmed by Apollonius, who learned while on his long travels that which later on endowed him with the surname of "Magi" and Philosopher.

Our Jerome, placed in the position we have seen, and finding himself already possessed of a wealth of erudition, judged that it was time he should pass on to higher studies, and resolved to quit Rome and seek for such masters as would teach him the road to the greatest of the sciences. He determined to pass on to France, and persuaded his great friend Bonosus to accompany him with the same object. It is true to say that in Rome there were men learned in the sacred Scriptures; but, on the other hand, there had come flying rumours of many wise men in Gaul, and furthermore on the way thither they could become acquainted with the rhetoricians and great orators of the Latin tongue, who flourished in those lands, and be able to copy the manner of eloquent speech, and imitate that grandeur of oratory, which has ever been common to them; and by joining this to the gravity of the Roman style they might form, between these two extremes, a middle diction, which, without offence, should partake of what was good and of advantage in both.

Another motive for undertaking this journey was to frequent the great and famous libraries that were scattered throughout the cities of France in those times, where, by taking notes of the best authors found there, they might

enrich themselves by collecting and purchasing good books, for, despite the fact, that the price would be high, since they were all in manuscript, yet Jerome would be able to defray the cost, because, as we have said, he was the son of wealthy parents, and who were nothing loth to provide him with such just needs. The saintly youth was thus moved to start on his journey; nevertheless, this was not the primary motive which had impelled him to go forth, but what I shall proceed to state.

At the time Jerome studied in Rome—being very young—the various branches of learning we have spoken about, the holy Bishop of Pictavium (Poitiers), having returned from exile, was during that period engaged in reforming and confirming in the faith throughout Italy and Illyria all the churches, and such as had been infected by the general heresy of Arius.

The holy prelate effected this reform with such diligence, and afforded so great an example of sanctity and such erudition accompanied by native eloquence that he was held throughout the provinces as a father general of the faith and pillar of light to the Church.

It is true that Eusebius, the Bishop of Vercelli, greatly assisted St. Hilary in this undertaking; but all such writers as have written of this subject—among them Sozomen,[1] Socrates,[2] Rufinus,[3] Nicephorus,[4] and others—unanimously accord the palm to the holy prelate of Poitiers, and speak of him in this affair as though he stood alone.

The whole of Italy was full of his fame, and in every place men commented on his work, his solid faith, his great learning and eloquence; and in Rome, as a consequence, all this was not concealed but made known, and

[1] Sozomen, lib. 5, c. 12.
[2] Socrat. lib. 3, c. 8.
[3] Rufin. lib. 1, c. 30, 31
[4] Nizeph. lib. 10, c. 17.

therefore Jerome must have had considerable tidings of his doings.

It was, moreover, a subject of general comment in this city at that time how greatly *Belles-Lettres* flourished in France, and that questions of faith were defined in a masterly manner, and that there were many books and writings which as yet had not been published. And for one who, like our saintly youth, had such high purposes and aspirations, to undertake these studies in an earnest manner it is clearly manifest that the knowledge of these facts acted as a vivid stimulus to undertake with joy and zest this great journey, judging it to be one of importance and interest. This resolution he carried out, and thus commenced to follow the path of those above-mentioned men who studied more wisely by seeing and by travel.

It is by conjecture, as there is no further light to guide us, that we believe Jerome to have been in his seventeenth or eighteenth year, although some hold that he must have been twenty or twenty-one,—for he himself says that being a young man he went to France, to that part of Brittany called Scotia, where he found the inhabitants of the province so uncivilised that they eat human flesh.

I doubt whether he made the acquaintance of the holy Bishop Hilary. Some hold it as certain that he did, and that he remained with him a few days, in accordance with those words which he wrote, *Ad Magnum Oratorem*, where he calls Hilary the Confessor of his time.

According to what our saint states in his Chronicles, Hilary died in the year 372 of our Holy Redeemer, or, according to Honophrius in 378, in the fifth year of the reigns of Valentinian and Valens, while the Roman Breviary puts it down as the year 373. On his return from the war of the heretics and the reformation he effected in Italy he proceeded to reside quietly in his bishopric for six years,

according as the authors who lived nearest his time assert, and along with them Sulpicius. Hence, according to our reckoning with respect to the age of Jerome, he must have been at least twenty-three years old, when Hilary died. The very fact that in none of his epistles does he himself mention having spoken to or communicated with Hilary, despite that with his usual humility he loved to call himself his disciple, strengthens me in the belief that he neither saw him nor conversed with him.

The first place these two good students Jerome and Bonosus dwelt in, when they came to France, appears to have been on the banks of the Rhine (Rhenus); this he gives us to understand when writing to Rufinus.[1] Now as there existed many cities along the banks of this great river it is not possible to say in which of them the two youths took up their abode, unless we state that it was in the city which took its name from the river, similarly as those who live in Alcalá, we say, reside in the town of Henares, and so on; and therefore we will say he lived in the city so-called of the Rhine.

Before it flows into the ocean this great river divides into different branches, and after separating France from Germany spreads out, according to Cornelius Tacitus, into two, and according to Pliny and Ptolemy (which seems to be truer) into three arms—one arm being called Hebus, the other Helius, the third remaining with the name of Rhine, which last named being the largest of the three streams, the name of that town was called the city of the Rhine; and to this place did these saintly companions withdraw for some time, because he says that these half-barbarian tribes, who inhabited the banks of the Rhine, afforded them dwelling and support.

Their abode here must have greatly pleased them,

[1] *Epist.* 41.

because it was far removed from such human communications as could disturb them from their holy thoughts, and distract them from the meditation of the sacred Scriptures,—as also because the river was to them a singular motive for, and a living lesson of that which with such earnestness they aspired to, which was to acquire purity of soul.

This they judged to find in the path of meditation and penance, and for both these things the river suited them; and its border people, although barbarians, served them for book and masters, for to him who yearns to advance in the path of virtue all things are of profit, all things speak to him and respond, and from all circumstances he knows how to draw precious interest.

Some grave authors, such as Aristotle, Galen, Virgil, and St. Gregory Nazianzen state that the dwellers on the banks of the Rhine had the custom of taking newly born babes to the river to be washed in its cold waters, in order to work two effects; viz. to make them healthy, and also to strengthen and brace up the body for future hard labour.

Galen, learned doctor that he was, and brought up in the luxury of Asia, greatly ridicules so barbarous a custom, and says it is madness to act in this manner. These barbarians think that new-born infants are like the red-hot iron taken from the forge, which becomes tempered and hardened by being immersed in cold water, and that similarly would infants be strengthened by immersion in cold water. This custom is referred to likewise by Aristotle, who covertly approves of it. Julius Cæsar, also, declares this fact, as well as Virgil in his poems, when describing the custom of foreign races, and personally lauds it. St. Gregory Nazienzen refers to it in one of his Epigrams, and declares another secret motive for this custom, which was that thereby the father was

assured of the legitimacy of the child. This strange custom of the people, and the property of the waters of this river, is made manifest to us by its own name of Rhine, which, in the language of the Germans and the Dutch, means pure, chaste, and without alloy. All this must have been to Jerome and Bonosus, newly-born children in Christ, a noble subject for their spiritual meditations and exercises, for to them also was known the custom and the properties of those waters. It would seem that they had purposely come there direct from the bosom of their Mother Church, in order to prove themselves by early and hard penance, and, so to speak, to temper themselves from early boyhood to become saints, and in the company of those barbarous people to harden themselves in those cold waters, in order to be able later on to know how to comport themselves in the midst of great encounters, discomforts, austerities, hunger, and rude treatment. Furthermore, it appears to me, they desired to prove themselves in the purity of those waters, frequently betaking themselves to the river's bank, and immersing themselves in the cold stream, in order to punish the irregular motions of youth. Turning their eyes towards heaven, and lifting up their souls in prayer, they must have uttered words of the following effect to their Lord and Father Jesus Christ: "Lord! It has been done as Thou didst will. Thou hast engendered us, Thy children, in the holy bosom of Thy Church! And in Thy inscrutable wisdom Thou didst will that it should have been in Rome: we have been born again in Thy precious blood, and our souls are still quivering in its burning power! Lord! Do Thou prove us in these icy, flowing waters, and see whether for Thy love we can bear them! Lord! Do thou acknowledge us as Thy legitimate children, in order that from henceforth we may call thee,

with a voice of confidence and full of lively hope, '*Our Father!*' O Father and Lord! preserve in our hearts the purity of our baptismal innocence which this river with its name brings back to our memory; and since we did cast into the waters of baptism the poison of the ancient serpent, and the old Adam remained buried in them, enkindle and infuse in these present waters Thy holy love (for this we owe Thee as to our Father) and Thy holy fear, which as to our Lord we render Thee; and by the icy coldness of these waters let the flesh and its desires be chilled, and its warmth all withdrawn into the soul, in order that with ardent desires we may seek Thee and serve Thee. And, whereas against the changes of time this river still preserves in the mother tongue the purity of its ancient dwellers, who were distinguished by the simplicity and chastity of their lives, do Thou, O Lord, preserve in us, despite all the assaults of this world and the powers of evil, this our first investiture—the pure being of Christian. May our life correspond with our name; may the loyalty we owe Thee continue as long as life; and permit not that these creatures of Thine should acknowledge any other Father, nor our souls love any other spouse."

These and similar motives for holy thought and exercises did that dwelling-place suggest to them, for all things are of profit to such as walk with desires of deriving advantage.

We have also good reasons for supposing that they suffered during their first residence in France many discomforts and dangers, privations and rude treatments, fears and sadness — two youths of such tender age, unknown, without relatives, friends, or protectors, and, moreover, surrounded by barbarous people and in a strange country, far distant from home, what else could be

expected? Yet, I know not what to think—for when I consider this epoch in the life of our saint I am amazed. At times it appears to me to be the desert of St. John the Baptist, although I perceive the difference; at other times I call to mind the lion's den of Daniel, and though not the same, yet it partakes of the good and the evil of both episodes; for it does not appear to me so fearful or so dangerous to live alone in the desert among the wild beasts, because I know they lack reason and are not lashed to attack you unless driven to do so, as it is to live with men, who although to all appearance they possess reason, yet never make use of it, and are roused to fury and persecute simply for a whim. Because, when man gives way to his passions, no animal can be compared to him. The King of Babylon was more concerned for the fate of Daniel, when the prophet was in the lion's den, on account of the fury which men might visit him with if brought out, than for the harm the lions would do to him when inside the pit, and for this reason he ordered the entrance to the pit to be sealed to prevent the populace from above killing him, to whom the lions below did homage.

Such as these, or worse, were the men with whom at such an early age our saint had to live with, for nearly all inhabitants of those shores were cannibals. We might well add, in view of what has been said already, and what Jerome had already experienced, that many saints whom we hold to be great might well have been content to end here, where in truth our saint was only commencing,—as the history of his life will reveal to us,—but God had created Jerome to be very great indeed in His Church, and therefore from his tenderest years He tries and proves him in things very lofty and very difficult. Oh, divine goodness, how continued must his tears have flowed!

How deep his sighs! How sustained his fasts! How protracted his vigils! What food! What apparel! What a couch! What an abode! Oh! thou dear saint, why didst thou keep silent about all these things? Did it never occur to thee to mention them? Yes, indeed, it must have been so! But thou who in thy love and humility judgest all thy actions to be so lowly and insignificant, although they were great indeed, wouldst have classed them as so many childish things and of youth!

This holy saint dreads much to tell his affairs, unless by so doing he can discover an occasion for humbling himself, lest he should be wanting oil for his lamp at the coming of the Bridegroom, and he well knows how dangerous it is to go forth at the last moment to purchase oil from those who sell it so dearly!

Such as doubt the difficulty of this period in the life of the saint let him find himself in an equal position even for a few short days, and he will learn by experience what St. Jerome must have gone through at the very beginning of his life.

From the notes left by our saintly doctor in his writings, we learn that there was scarcely a town, province, or place of importance in France that he had not visited. In the epistle he wrote to Geruncia,[1] wherein he deplores the havoc caused by the barbarians throughout Gaul, that extensive tract which lies between the Alps and the Pyrenees from the ocean to the Rhine, and he names very accurately each of the provinces. Again, in the epistle he wrote to Aedibia and Algasia, noble matrons of France, he gives a similar description. What, however, we know for certain is that he sojourned many days in the city of Trèves, where the great Defender of the Faith, Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, had been exiled not long before.

[1] *Epist.* 11.

During these travels the occupations of Jerome were not worthless ones, nor his halts made without deriving advantage. In those days Trèves was a most flourishing University, but a few years after our saint left the French themselves destroyed it in the time of Honorius; yet at the time we speak of the study of sacred and profane letters was carried out so brilliantly that it resembled another Athens. And the renown of studies pursued in this University dates very far back, for even in the time of Maximian and of Diocletian, as we learn from Sigonius[1] that the *élite* of France used to resort to Trèves; and when Acrisius was sent thither by Pope St. Sylvester and the Emperor Constantine, it is known for certain that he restored the studies and letters, which had been laid aside, to their pristine renown, exchanging, however, pagan and profane studies for Christian and Catholic ones. This is proved by a writing of the Emperor Gratian, wherein mention is made of the *Belles-Lettres* which flourished in that city.

It was at Trèves that our Jerome lingered, for, like another Plato, he ever sought in his journeys through the world what would best benefit his soul; and in order that the Church of Christ should possess a Jerome, all this was necessary! Among his occupations while at Trèves was that of transcribing, with his own hand, the Book of Synods of the holy Prelate Hilary. The reason for doing so was because this work examined and treated upon the principal articles of our faith, viz., the mystery of the most holy Trinity, and the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, and these points were there so clearly defined by the canons and decrees of the councils which had been held against Arius and Sabellius, and against the rest of the heretics who up to that period had dogmatised and

[1] *Carol. sign.* lib. I. et 10. *De Occident imper.*

withdrawn themselves from the teaching of the Church in regard to those two mysteries, that it seemed to Jerome, as a prudent student, that it was an affair of the greatest importance to fix once for all, and discern with all truth, what on these points had been determined by the sacred councils, as well as what the ancient fathers and the saints had written and commented upon, in regard to these mysteries, in order that he might walk securely along the path of the sacred Scriptures, not trusting to his own genius, nor attempting rash heights in matters of so much subtlety and grandeur.

Jerome makes mention of this good occupation of his when writing to Florentius,[1] where he entreats him to send him two books, one on the Exposition of the Book of the Psalms and the other of the "Synods of St. Hilary," which he himself had transcribed with his own hand when in Trèves, for the saintly aged Paulus. This Paulus was a very pious man, with whom he formed a sincere friendship (for the saints soon learn to know one another), and it was on account of this friendship that, some years later, he wrote the life of Malchus, a captive monk.

At that time this city of Trèves possessed great relics of antiquity, of which, no doubt, our saint had much information, for he was very diligent in his researches, and neglected no opportunity of learning; hence it is my belief that he derived much knowledge respecting those celebrated men of France, who were called Druids, about their religion, their doctrine and divine secrets, and which are not far removed from those which are professed by Christianity, also of their rites, sacrifices, and ceremonies, in which some even venture to say there are found great sacraments. Perhaps an occasion may present itself later on to treat more fully of this matter.

[1] *Ad Florent., Epist.* 6.

We have no further light to guide us as to what else he did whilst in France. I can, however, at least affirm that during these travels he learnt much and advanced greatly in the study of letters, and that he returned much benefited by the experience he had acquired, the many things he had seen, and also from his communications with the learned men he had met in all the provinces.

Under the name of Gaul was then understood what is now called Flanders and Lower Germany and other provinces.

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

St. Jerome returns from France. He seeks Entrance into a Profession. Here is declared what it is to enter into the Profession of the Church; and what was the Monastic State in former Times.

Jerome, like a solicitous bee of Christ, had gathered already the flowers and the liquor for that which was of moment for his work, his heart enriched, and his vessel as it were filled with all that he had culled from his intercourse with learned men. He decided to return to his native land, not only to Stridon, his birthplace in the order of nature, but also to Rome, where in the order of grace he had been re-engendered in Christ. The time was approaching when our Lord was going to reveal to the world what He had deposited in that illustrious youth, and for what lofty things He had destined him. He inspired him with the determination to return, so that he should put away all the things of the world. He maintained a great recollection, pondering always on what kind of life he should choose which would be most pleasing to his Lord Jesus Christ. And whereas it was his ardent wish from his earliest years to serve God, his life and conversation all tended to that end. He would lay before Him in prayer this affair, beseeching Him to enlighten him concerning an act of so much importance,

and for this end he performed many exercises of devotion and piety. He considered all the different states of a Christian life, and being endowed with a lofty mind he investigated and examined the objections of each; yet all states of Holy Church appeared to him good and saintly, and all tended, though by different paths, to the one and same end. In all of them he saw that the flowers of piety flourished, and that saints rose up resplendent, though on further investigation he did not find in all what he sought for the purpose which was nearest his heart, and they did not quite fulfil his desires. He judged to be holy the state of matrimony, albeit it involved according to his mind many obligations and a dire servitude, rendering a man subject, as the Apostle says, *to the tribulations of the flesh*, to the demands of a wife, and her caprices and whims, his attention devoted to the bringing up of his children, a prey to cupidity in the affairs of his property, with the object of benefiting them, engrossed with the care of his servants and family—in a word, divided into a thousand parts, he whose desire was to give himself up completely to one great affair—the love and service of his God alone. And to a free soul, which commences to taste in contemplation what it is to find itself delivered from the cares and solicitudes of the world, it would be to carry many bonds with impatience. Furthermore, the difficulty of selecting a companion who would bring some relief amid so many difficulties, a thing so rarely found, and which, in the opinion of many grave philosophers, like Theophrastus and others, is a thing of such difficulty that they held it as impossible that these qualifications should be united in a marriage bond, or so many conditions found in a woman. Our saintly doctor later on touched upon these things in many of his *Epistles*, more especially in

the first book against Jovinian,[1] where he declares what is very much to the purpose. I do not insert it here, in order to avoid so many digressions, although to state what so great a saint felt on the subject would be very desirable, but whoever should require his counsels can consult them for himself, and, in truth, he would not find anywhere instruction better or more learnedly stated.

The ecclesiastical state was the one which most captivated his soul, but on considering its many degrees and characteristics there arose before him a difficulty. He beheld many priests and even bishops, who gave a very sorry account of their lives and their offices; he feared lest, should he take that path in life, he would be dragged along by the current, as so many had been, who, having entered religion with right good purposes and had begun well, yet their after life and end were wretched. Dignities and honours, and offices in the church, in addition to the temporal business attached to them, do not leave a man so greatly a master of himself as not to make him fall many times, for it is a difficult thing to be always resisting and struggling against what is ever tending to fall, borne down by its very weight. Then, with these dignities there arises in proportion vanity, for they are a perpetual stimulus to vainglory on account of the repute the world holds them in, adoring them either for interest or for flattery's sake. It so happens that sometimes from this cause a man falls to such a state (despite the fact that he may fulfil his office fully) that he does not know himself in a few years' time; and he who yesterday was in truth humble and even obscure, on seeing that so many pay him honour and abase themselves on account of the dignity and the ministry he exercises, and on account also of the revenue he enjoys, becomes

[1] Tom. 2, lib. 1, *contra Jovin.* cap. 28.

vain and proud, so that he altogether forgets what he came from. And behind this door a hundred other gates are opened, through which enter in a furious troop of vices, which leave him so disfigured and ghastly that he remains as though under an evil spell and beside himself, without knowing those whom he converses with, hateful to God and to men, because the offices and ministries which the Holy Spirit has divided throughout the body of the Church were not formed in order to puff up individuals, despising others, as we are taught by the two princes of the Apostles,[1] but to serve their brethren according to the rules of our Master Jesus Christ, in which He ordains that *the greater be as the lesser*, forasmuch as His school is not like the palaces of the Gentile princes. All these things did our saintly youth view with attentive gaze, and every moment he was turning away from the world and all its affairs, and through these very investigations was learning more and more to despise the world and to cast himself with greater earnestness into the loving arms of Jesus Christ, while the fire of the Holy Spirit took firmer possession of his soul.

Hence, viewing dispassionately and leisurely all things; pondering over them one by one, and weighing the interest which might accrue to him in the different states of the Church, he found that what more nearly approached his ideal, and by which he could the better renounce the world and the things of the world, and attain more nearly evangelical perfection, as also the surest path (albeit the narrowest) by which he could follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, was the monastic life. That holy state which (in comparison to life in the world which has been regenerated and merged in the purity of the Christian life) is also called the religious life. This resolution he

[1] 2 Peter.

took firmly, and, without delaying or wavering in his purpose, he at once sought to put into execution. From that moment he placed himself entirely in the hands of his Lord and Master, Who had been bestowing on him from his earliest years the principles of that science, which with so much reason is called the "science of the saints." Oh, blessed is he who from a child becomes accustomed to the burden of Thy sweet yoke, O Lord! For thus dost Thou call Thy holy gospels; and blessed is he who shall taste its sweetness, for, as the prophet says, he will rise above it, and above all that has a name, for it is there Thou makest known to them Thy name which is ineffable, and is known but by the one who bears it! O Lord! it is not in vain that Thou dost sow those fair seeds with such anticipation, in the earliest years of the life of Thy servants, for in due season they will bud forth into comely trees and produce ripe fruits, and the talents Thou dost entrust to them will yield vast interests. It was therefore the final resolution of Jerome to embrace the hard life of a monk and to persevere therein until death; and in this decision ended the well-discussed "council of State."

Now I cannot but marvel, at this point, on the cunning of the devil, in his ministers. The enemy loses no occasion; he knows how to take advantage of all things for his purposes. Who would dare to say, that, at this period, there could have entered malice? And who would suppose that from this the devil would have taken occasion to combat the various orders of the Church?

For one of the most qualified ministers of Satan,[1] writing the life of this great Father and Doctor of the Church, declares that St. Jerome chose the monastic state, because such as in those times of the Church most loved

[1] Erasmus in *Vita D. Hieron.*

their liberty and were most free, and enemies of being governed by others, lovers of an exterior life, were those who chose the profession of monks, and declares that Jerome, being one of this class of persons, chose this state for himself from among all others, because he dearly loved his liberty.

And entitling him Doctor of the Church, this historian and searcher of the things of antiquity further adds: "And that no one should make a mistake on this point, let him know that the monks of that time and the monks of the present day are very different; because, as regards the former, their property always remained to them, and was secured to those who embraced this state. Moreover, they could go out and return again to their monastery, when, and how they pleased. They lived comfortably, and were free to choose their studies, their fasts, the chanting of the Psalms, prayers, holy vigils, and the rest of the spiritual exercises. They were not constrained to adopt any one of these good works, but were impelled by their own free will, and could take them up or discontinue them when they pleased; because they were not bound by those little rules and precepts, which men have since invented. Their dress was plain, and of the shape each one judged best would suit him, so long as it should not be very eccentric or noteworthy, so as not to be pointed at by others, but one that should manifest the simplicity of a Christian. Such a thing as vows was not thought of, nor anything else involved by them. Lastly, should any of them repent, or draw back from his resolve and the monastic state, there was attached to it no further difficulty, nor any penalty, nor did he incur any censure, but the fact that he remained with the name of "inconstant." Such are the words of this so-called great restorer of the customs of the ancient religion.

Little would the Church have lost had this monster not been born, who, instead of restoring the holy customs of those times, and the golden age of the Christian religion, in which resplendently shone throughout the world the purity of the monastic life, misrepresented and calumniated it, spreading the harm of the heresies, which since that epoch until the present time have been scattered by the false children of the Church. If we look into what this author has said, we shall find that there is no word without malice, and in each one an error is disguised. He denies in the first instance the key of the whole regular monastic state by withdrawing obedience, and placing in its stead free liberty. After this he flings down poverty; and that nought should escape his hands, he altogether denies that in those times there were any vows! He laughs at the constitutions and the different modes of life by which those are distinguished who agree upon the three vows, essential and common, and such as are taken in all religious orders. He removes the habit, because even the dress annoys him (such was his hatred for the orders); and asserts that the monks of those times were free, they lived as they willed, came in and went out as they pleased, because by these means he might take away apostacy and censures, and show that the penalty was nothing more than to be held to be somewhat light-headed, fond of change, and inconstant. I greatly marvel that among the many things, which were erased and condemned in the writings of this wicked historian and incompetent judge of the ancient religion, and of the life of our saint, this passage was not blotted out. For I do not think that there is another passage in all his works more impious and malicious than this one. And the life which he has written of our holy doctor is permeated with similarly base ideas. Had Jerome been as this wicked author depicts him, he would not have been

given us by the Holy Roman Church as a mirror of sanctity and of learning.

Now, in order to expose his ignorance and his malice, it will be advisable here to declare which are the states in the Church; what it means to choose a state in it, and what state of perfection did our Jerome select; whether in those days religious perfection was practised by the monks; what were the religious at that time, if they were as he depicts them to us, or like those of our days; what difference exists between the former communities and the present ones, in order that all should be rightly understood. The celestial republic of the Church, which God ordained on earth, is a perfect body, having for its head Jesus Christ. In like manner the republic of the whole creation has a head which is God, by whom all that exists therein was created, from whom all things depend and are sustained and preserved. And in the same way as in this One God are united all perfections, or rather they are all one most simple perfection, without any manner or composition of parts; and this One, being so great as It is, cannot be contained in any one thing which is a creature, but in the multitude and infinity of them all (that is to say, could they be infinite); and is, as it were, divided among them, yet without the whole of them being able to—I will not say exhaust, but not even—form any part or proportion with all their excellences of that One Divine Perfection, which being participated in as Head and Fountain, yet remains entire. In the same way the fulness of grace which is stored up in the head of the Church, Christ, is divided throughout all the various offices, grades, and states of this same Church. And this is not accidental or voluntary in this body, but as native and essential as are the riches and wealth of things which we see, for the perfection of this great body of the universe. This is the philosophy of

St. Paul which he taught the Ephesians in these words (speaking of Christ as coming from God and man), saying,[1] *He gave some apostles and some prophets, and others some evangelists, and others some pastors and doctors for the perfecting of the saints;* to the end that each one performing his office, and each rendering good account of his works, the edifice of this mystic body of Christ, which is the Church, may be perfected. And in the same way as in our bodies there are many different members, according as the same apostle learnedly puts it to the Romans,[2] "*and having different gifts given us . . . to be used, according to the rule of faith,*" each fulfilling its especial function without interfering or usurping the position of another, so, too, in the whole body of believers being joined together with its head Christ it needs be that this body be divided in its offices and grades, without the one mingling with the other or introducing itself, or usurping that of another, or through pride despising it, but each one attending to the part which appertains to him, and keeping the code which is given him, in order to fulfil his duty perfectly, without confounding the hierarchy and order of this celestial arrangement. One of the things which more greatly astonished the Queen of Sheba and which she admired most in the wisdom of Solomon, was the order in which the whole economy of his house was arranged, so much so that the sacred scriptures as a fact enlarges upon it, declaring that she was amazed and delighted beyond measure when she beheld the various offices so well apportioned, the good order existing among the dignitaries of the court, and the officials so well chosen that no voice of dissension was heard, each one acting in his own grade and position, so that, despite the great number of attendants and functionaries, not only was there

[1] Ephesians iv. 11, 12.

[2] Romans xii. v. 6.

no confusion, but there existed a perfect harmony among them.

But this man, or those who followed him, did not wish to see all this harmony or distinction of members, nor even a head, for they all detest it. And this is characteristic of the inhabitants of Babylon, citizens of that kingdom without order, full of frightful discord. They detest the order of the tribes of which David sings, of the house of the Lord which goes up in set lines, and with the squadrons in order towards the holy city of Jerusalem, so that with perpetual praises testimony be given to this One, greater than Solomon, Who arranges it. This is the foundation, and as it were, the root of the orders in the Church; from this is produced her beauty; from this springs her flowers and fruits, and from this also arises, that, on account of her state, she stands intrinsically and essentially immovable and firmly placed, because that which is easily moved or which we can undo at our whim, we do not say of it that it has order, firmness, quietude, nor is of any account. From whence the strong argument is taken that as to what in the Church is to merit the name of order, from its fruits a certain reflective respect is cast upon the person itself of man, in so far as it makes him a servant of freemen, and invests him with any of these conditions.

In order fully to understand this in its very foundation, we must remember that in things spiritual, such as are those of the Church, there are two manners of servitude and two kinds also of liberty—viz., the servitude or liberty of sin, and the servitude or liberty of justice, as St. Paul teaches when he says: "*For when you were the servants of sin, you were free men to justice. Now being freed from sin, we have been made servants of justice . . . and become servants of God.*"[1] That proneness to sin and slavery of

[1] Romans vi. 18-22.

the vices, which we notice in men of depraved lives because reason is carried captive by the bonds of evil habits, is called servitude, and is the servitude of sin; but on the contrary in the good aided by the sweet bonds of virtues is found the generous service of justice. And he possesses this, who subjects himself, and in lieu of servitude he finds a great principality, as David besought when in his penitence he shook off the yoke of the first servitude and cried out, "*Confirm me, O Lord, with the spirit of a Prince*,"[1] because, contemning with generous heart the low, mean things of sensual pleasures, he comes forth to the full liberty and lordship of the Prince who expects the vast inheritance of the kingdom, and this is called the liberty of sin. But that lawlessness and rashness, by which a man without fear of justice runs on in the course of vice as though he had no master, is called liberty of justice. Man, in accordance with the natural reason with which he has been endowed (and which is his noblest part), is really more inclined to what is right and just than what is evil and perverse, as being against the natural inclination of this higher principle. From this arises that the liberty of sin is that which is properly called liberty, and it is united lovingly with the subjection which this part owes to justice, inclining gently to its service, because the natural right of man so demands.

From whence is seen at once how the terms cross one another—that service and obedience to the vices means liberty of justice, and obedience and service of justice implies the liberty of the vices, and the right order in which he was created by his Maker; and, when he does not obey the rules of his better nature, he in truth remains captive in the bands of sin, taking both the one and the other in his own hands and by his own works. From

[1] Psalm l.

which it results that as these works do not attain at once to the most perfect degree according to their kind, it must needs be that they have a beginning, a middle term, and an end.

The beginning belongs to such as commence; the middle term to those who have already passed part of the road; and the end is for such as have attained the goal, called the perfect state, because nothing is wanting to them. This is clearly stated by the two Princes of the Church in parts of their Epistles; I merely touch upon them in part in our history in order not to lengthen this discourse. Let it be therefore established that in the state of being free from sin and serving unto justice there exist these three grades.

This may be considered either in respect to what passes in man in the secret of the soul in that part which only God sees, or in respect to the exterior in this public view of the Church in sight of men. In the former (the interior secret) God alone is the Judge, and the Holy Spirit, who is the Architect of that fabric. Of what passes outwardly (although it is the work also and arrangement of the same Spirit) the Church is the judge; because it is palpable work, the republic of action and of visible policy, of the states and dispositions of His monarchy.

God judges, and alone knows who in his interior is a beginner, or who is perfect, and into this the Church does not enter; but she judges and knows, who is so outwardly. From which it is made manifest that for one in the Church to be declared in a state of liberty or servitude it is necessary to have some visible obligation or absolution; since it is not sufficient reason for one to be declared servant, because he serves, or that he should be free because he does not serve, for St. Paul says: "I served you through spiritual love and charity at times, and which

should be found among you; and as to the fugitive servant flight does not give him the state of freedom. He alone is free who is not bound by a contract of servitude; and that one is a servant who is bound by such a bond and obligation. This contract must be made binding and solemn, as is customary in all contracts between men, for the sake of its firmness and permanency." Hence the whole subject is resolved thus—that in order to render it a state, and with reason be called so in the Church, there must intervene obligation and solemnity. For which cause he who, renouncing the world, freeing himself from its servitude, takes refuge in the royal vassalage of Christian justice, and enters the state of religion, makes a contract between God and himself (at least outwardly), and with all solemnity binds himself to the laws and service of justice in the state he professes.

This was the course our saint chose. This was what he had determined upon in his heart with all earnestness, because to determine upon being a monk was to adopt truly the state of perfection, desiring to take so arduous a path, withdrawing himself from the common high road, to follow the narrow one found by the few. Thus it adds to the two general points of which I have spoken, solemnity and obligation (which include the married state and the priesthood), that of perfection, which is a different (at least in the outward or visible view of the Church) perfection, I say, essential to the state. For although priests, by reason of their state, may be bound to preserve a very great cleanliness of heart, because they receive daily into their breasts One Who consumes hearts alone, are not under the obligation as is proper to religious entailed by their vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. And if to these we further add, solicitude and desire for the good of the brethren, the

giving up of temporal goods for their necessities, the laying down of life for the sheep, it will be to form a state of perfection, I will not say of religious, but of prelates and pastors of the Church.

From this is also understood what seems incomprehensible to many that a person may be in a *state* of perfection, yet be very far from being perfect; and *vice versa*, we may and can be very perfect without being in such a state. And this doctrine was practically taught us by Christ in the scene depicted to us by the evangelist St. Matthew in the parable of the Two Sons. One of these told his father he would not go and cultivate the vine, yet he went and worked well at it; the other said he would go, but in the end never went, and thus did no work. Because if the outward act does not correspond to the interior will, it would be an affair of no value; whereas the contrary would be the case, if the interior acts on the outward act. A monstrous thing must this seem, and even dangerous, nevertheless it is not so when properly understood. It is not inferred because a person may be in a state of perfection as regards the outward form, and yet be not so in the interior, that he is in a bad state, or that he is a monster, untruthful or unfaithful. St. Paul, assuming in himself this position, comforts them by saying: "Not because I have attained the height, or should be already perfect; but I follow, and walk on to strive to attain it." Those who bind themselves to the monastic state and to the integrity of their profession, do not promise interior perfection, nor could they oblige themselves to the impossible by their own strength. By two ways are they wanting in the exterior perfection which they professed—one by deed, by not executing what is demanded by their state: by the omission of this they are neither liars nor perfidious, nor

does it place them in a bad state by reason of the state. Another way is the purpose and thought, if they determined not to walk in the manner they had promised, these St. Paul calls "*enemies" of the Cross of Christ*; for the instant they fall in thought without doubt are in a bad state, and they do not fulfil, like perfidious men, what they had with such solemnity promised so great a Lord, which was to follow along the path of that exterior perfection, as far as their state demands towards the interior one. But when, through weakness, want of knowledge, or the miseries to which as mortals we are surrounded, the fault is due, it does not place us on that account in a bad state. To this St. Paul gives the name of "human temptation," when admonishing us not to allow ourselves to be carried away by any but such as is human. Hence, from the moment when the public profession and contract is made in the Church (as a sign of the interior profession), judgment is made, and we declare with truth that he who has made it is in the state of perfection. Here the religious must act with great circumspection in order that never through a grave encounter or fall he should dismiss from his heart the purpose of always proceeding on the road, and of deriving profit from this state of perfection, which undoubtedly he will do and follow so long as this intention does not cease, and he follows the path taught him by the holy laws, vows, and constitutions, notwithstanding that a thousand times he should stumble, and as many times fall.

This is what appertains to the orders in the Church. Through not following this rule did Erasmus utter his inventions, and who says that those who were most free in those holiest of times became monks, forasmuch as this state was one of much liberty! It is thus made clear that the contrary to his assertions is the actual fact, and

we see how Jerome did not embrace this holy state with any such base ideas. I would willingly enter into a refutation of all that this inventor and other heretics have sown broadcast in those times, as well as they do in our days, against the monastic state, to whom the name of monk was odious, and this refers to every description of heretic; for this subject and refutation has been treated upon by many pious men with great erudition. But it is an affair in which the honour of the universal Church is concerned to show the truth and antiquity of the monastic state, so loved and cherished by her, because in assuming to remove it the heretics pretend to lead us to understand that she has been hitherto deceived in what *they* are pleased to call *an invention*. Let us, therefore, briefly explain the antiquity and origin of the monastic state, and how in its essential part it has ever been the same throughout the ages of the Church.

I wish in the first place to mention that there is no ancient saint, who so clearly and so frequently treats on the matter of the vows, especially on the vow of chastity, as Jerome did. I have no intention to go so far as to say that holy Henoch was the first monk, although there are grave doctors who do affirm this,[1] that he invented and instituted some particular worship and system of reverence for God, as is recorded of him in the Book of Genesis,[2] and taught by him in the first ages. Because, although Adam, Abel, Seth, and other patriarchs of that first age, of whom no mention is made, honoured God and served Him, and invoked Him, yet only of Henoch, with the especial approval of the Holy Ghost, is it said that he began to honour God, and to invoke Him; and the Hebrew word, which is there used not only means to *invoke* and to *call*, but it also means to call *to meeting* and congregation, or as

[1] Peter Martyr.

[2] Genesis v.

though we should say into *community*. Neither do I wish to treat of the Nazarites, of whom, according to the Book of Numbers,[1] it is stated that they consecrated themselves to God; nor of the sons of the Prophets, who, in the school and obedience of Elias and Eliseus, lived without wife or property, whereby is clearly illustrated the observance of the three vows, and of whom Origen and Jerome say that following their example there were many in the Church; and when writing to Paulinus,[2] the saintly doctor calls them their princes, captains, and guides among the others he names. Nor do I wish to bring forward the sons of Rechab,[3] of whom Jeremias gives such an illustrious memoir, because both Jeremias in his writings and St. Jerome in the same epistle depicts them in such wise, that would to Heaven we, the monks of these days, were as they, although we pride ourselves on being very strict and penitential. Yet I might, to come nearer our purpose, bring forward in proof of the antiquity of the monastic rule him whom all monks with perfect truth call its prince, namely, St. John the Baptist — of whom the ancient fathers, Basil, the two Gregories of Nazianzen and Nyssa, John Chrysostom and many others laud so greatly for this purpose, putting aside the high degree which our Lord assigned to him, when, in the prophecy spoken by the evangelist, He declared him to be above all men "born of woman." Our Jerome, too, speaking of the same, declares to the virgin Eustochium that the Prince of Hermits was St. John the Baptist. Let us, however, omit all these ancient Fathers and these first examples of the monastic life; and closing the Old Testament, let us open the New, so that none may say "we speak in shadows," and let us manifest the new light, which they so arrogantly and falsely attribute to themselves.

[1] Numbers vi. [2] *Epist.* 13. [3] Jeremias xxxv.

The first whom in good conscience we might allege, in order to prove the antiquity of the monks of the New Testament, is Philo, who compiled a whole book, entitled *Vita Supplicum*, where in eloquent style, as is his wont, he depicts the life of these holy religious, the first saintly fruits of the true evangelical life under the discipline and rule of the great evangelist St. Mark; wherein he, more clearly than the light of day, sets down three essential vows, in addition to other most holy ceremonies; and our saintly doctor from him gathers for his own work on *Illustrious Men* what the Church was in her principles, and the decline into which, even in the time of the saint, she was falling, and that it was this that the monks aimed at to reform and renew. The divine Dionysius, the Areopagite, wrote an epistle to Demophilus, the monk, the title of which suffices; but in the sixth chapter of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* he writes so largely and piously the life, profession, and order of the monks that it suffices to read it to have a summary of the question. I say, therefore, that the institutors and founders of this life and monastic state were the apostles, as appears by the *Acts of the Apostles*,[1] by which it will be seen that all such as called themselves disciples of Christ had nothing of their own, all things being common, neither did any one say that aught was his own. Yet this was not a thing adopted by all, who newly entered the Christian religion, and came into the body of the Church, and who were called believers, but only such as aspired to follow a narrower and more arduous path of perfection, as appears from the fifth chapter of the said Acts of the Apostles, where in a detailed manner the narrative is given of the punishment which the Holy Ghost meted out through the hands of St. Peter to Ananias and Sapphira, because, after having commenced this road of

[1] Acts iv.

perfection, they fraudulently kept back part of the price of the lands which they had sold, when it had been in their power to be Christians similarly to many others who were so, yet retained their lands without taking the vow of poverty. For so did St. Peter tell them.[1] That this was done under obligation of a vow is affirmed by St. Augustine in the books of the *City of God*,[2] where he says, "This vow they had made, and bound themselves to, these most powerful ones," and continues to speak of the apostles. And that orders and the monastic life had commenced with them and from that time, and that with their example other orders followed up to the present day, is stated by all the Fathers and Doctors of the Church—Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine, Isidore, Posidonius, and others, whilst John Cassian, who discussed this subject very lucidly, says that the cenobitical institution took its rise at the commencement of the Gospel preaching. That in those times there were fixed habits and constitutions is declared to us by our doctor, as we shall see in the course of this history of his life, and it is well known by such as peruse ecclesiastical histories. Hence, in a brief manner, we have made clear who in those times were monks, and that the religious of these days are similar as regards the essential points, as well as in many of the details of their life, and we also perceive that when our glorious Jerome resolved to embrace a state in the Church he chose the more perfect and strict one of monk.

I will proceed to quote in proof of this, and in order to speak the truth and make it known more clearly what the saint himself says of his resolve, and the strength of spirit, with which he undertook so arduous a purpose. In his epistle against John of Jerusalem he says:[3]—

[1] Acts vi. 4.

[2] August., *De Civit.* lib. 17, c. iv. *circa medium.*

[3] *Ad Parnac. contra Joan. Hierosolym., Epist.* 61.

"Granted that my brother Paulinian should have been ordained by your hand, I say that you must have heard from him what he learnt from me, who am but an insignificant man, through the saintly Father Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch. Peradventure did I beseech you to ordain me? If by you I am made a Priest, do not take from me the state of monk, settle that yourself as you desire; but if you mean by ordaining me a Priest to take from me that for which I left the world, and your intention be that I should deliver myself up altogether to the cure of souls for all time, I will thereby lose nothing nor you either, because I shall always preserve in my heart that which I once for all received for evermore." St. Epiphanius also alludes to this very aptly in one of his epistles[1] to the self-same John of Jerusalem, where he clearly shows us the great humility of Jerome and the firmness of his intention. "Perceiving," he says, "that in the monastery there were many monks, and that the saintly priests Jerome and Vincent, by reason of their great humility and self-abasement, did not wish to exercise high offices, nor to undertake such a grave charge as that of the cure of souls, and the celebration of the sacred mysteries, etc." Here in passing we are also reproved for our mad temerity and vain confidence in casting ourselves, who are deficient of merits and of all the qualifications required for exercising such high and heavenly offices and ministeries, into the sacred ministry, and, what is worse, to seek emoluments and high dignities with such heat and by many ways — oftentimes very illicitly—an evident sign to me that we neither understand the difficulty nor the danger involved.

Far differently did such as Augustine, Paulinus, Jerome, and his brother Paulinian view this great dignity,

[1] *Epist.* 60, in 2 Tim.

since in order to make them priests it became necessary to force them to accept the dignity, and impose silence upon them so that they should not conjure their superiors in the name of God, not to place them in such high positions. All this we find recorded in this Epistle of St. Epiphanius, as well as in many other documents, as we shall see farther on, and in the lives of many saints.

Oh, miserable times of the Church! How boldly is headway made now (for our sins!) for the pinnacle of priestly dignities and pontificates, taking as guides for such immeasured steps ambition and interest! I wish now to impose silence on language so odious, and bring to a conclusion so long a discourse, happy in having demonstrated how earnestly our pious youth undertook the severe strict state of the monk—and what is meant by that state in the Church, and that the monastic state of our times and that of former ages were intrinsically one and the same, and will always be, please God, so long as His Church lasts, despite the gates of Hell.

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

St. Jerome declares to his Parents and Friends his Resolution of becoming a Monk. Here is stated the Place selected for carrying out his Purpose.

Once the saintly youth had fixed and determined upon the new rule and life of perfection he had resolved to follow, he at once proceeded to reveal his intentions to his friends on his return to Rome, and induce them, if possible, to follow him by encouraging them to undertake so high a resolve. Among these friends was Bonosus, who, like a faithful Achates, had been his devoted companion, as we have already said, and with whom he had made his journey through France, for they were both united in sentiment and as though there existed but one soul between them; their thoughts were alike, and his companionship had produced such good fruits that now Jerome's desire was to appeal to him with burning words. It must have been a source of deep joy to the saintly Bonosus to comprehend the lofty aims of his beloved Jerome, whilst he, in his turn, manifested to Jerome his own, which were no less high, and differed in nothing. Some[1] hold that the first to carry out the scheme was Bonosus, but they are in error, because it is clearly proved that it was after our saint had retired to the desert that Bonosus withdrew

[1] Erasmus in *Vita.*

to an island of Dalmatia. This became known to our doctor through letters which he actually received whilst in the desert, written by Chromatius, Jovinius, and Eusebius, by conduct of his friend Evagrius who lived in Antioch.

In order to judge what were the feelings of our saintly doctor regarding this friend so dearly loved by him, let us hear what he pens to his later-on inconstant friend, Rufinus by name, in a letter sent from the desert. "Thy Bonosus and mine is ascending already that figurative ladder which Jacob saw in a dream; he carries his cross; he no longer thinketh of the morrow nor of yesterday, but goeth sowing in tears, so as to gather in joy and plenitude, and, like to another Moses, he raiseth aloft the mystic serpent in the desert. Be conquered and admit the superior advantage, O ye fabulous marvels and dreamed of deeds, couched in the elegant diction of Roman and Greek writings! Come and behold here a youth who was brought up among ourselves, and was instructed in the strict discipline of the age, possessing abundant wealth, whilst few could surpass him in dignity of lineage; and who forsaking mother, brothers, and sisters, went forth to live on an island, where the roar of the ocean wave is heard continually breaking upon the pebbly shore and amid the broken rocks; in a rough deserted spot, alone, in a frightful solitude, he rises up like a new inhabitant of Paradise!

"You will not find him there with husbandmen to till the soil, nor even monks to be his companions, no, not even that little servant, the childish Onesimus, whom you knew so well, and whom he loved with a brother's love, and who might serve him, nor does he have him at his side! There, on this solitary spot, he stands alone, no, I will not say alone, but in the company only of Jesus Christ. There, he witnesses the glory of God, which,

unless on the deserted mountain, not even the apostles were privileged to see. He does not look towards the proud cities of men, because he is already admitted to the fellowship and enrolment of the New City. Disfigured and emaciated are his limbs by the stiff, rough sackcloth he wears, yet he will thereby the better sally forth to the encounter, and be transfigured with Christ on the heights of the cloud. He has no luxuriant gardens, arranged with new conduits of water to flow on and fall in cascades and shoot up with the object of pleasing the sight, but he drinks from the open side of Christ the abundant waters of Life."

Many other things of equal beauty does this most eloquent saint describe to us, manifesting thereby the joys and sweetness that he experienced in his solitary life. I feel loth to pass them by, but I fear to become too lengthy were I to dwell on the erudition and elegance of diction of our doctor. All this, however, will necessarily be made manifest from the hold his heavenly words and counsels effected in the breast of this sincere and saintly friend.

Jerome informed also Pammachius of his purpose to enter the monastic state, and though in genius and in learning they were both very similar, and their ideas greatly in common, they were not, however, alike in the path of life they should follow by embracing the religious state. Pammachius desired to marry, which in truth he eventually did, and thus each took a different road. In Heliodorus Jerome's words found a better hearing, and his persuasion produced a greater effect. Hence he offered with right goodwill to follow that state which his companion encouraged him to embrace, although, as we shall find farther on, he eventually forsook it after he had dwelt in the desert for some time with Jerome, having altered

his purpose. Jerome likewise communicated to Rufinus of Aquileia his resolve of becoming a monk, and to Innocentius, Evagrius, and to Hylas, the servant of Melania. Nicetas, subdeacon of Aquileia, did not accompany him on this journey, but after he had been some time in the desert established a great friendship with him, and became a powerful helper in the designs of the saint. To all these friends did Jerome manifest his heart, and endeavoured to win them over to join him in his line of life. During the course of this history we shall be able to state in its proper place what became of each of them.

There now remained for Jerome to choose the place where this devout life was to be followed. After mature deliberation on this important question weighing all the pros and cons, he deemed that it would not be prudent to remain in his own country nor in the adjoining lands, because to be in continual communication with kindred and friends, and to listen to their affairs and trials, must greatly disturb and break upon that recollection and quietude which this holy state requires and demands. Furthermore, the manners of the people of those countries were very barbarous, their lives characterised by the vices of gluttony and avarice; moreover, at the time they had for their pastor in spiritual things a priest called Lupicinus, of whom Jerome did not approve, and despite the fact that he was but a youth, yet he did not like his evil habits.

All this does he say when writing to Eusebius, Jovinius, and Chromatius:[1] "In my native land, rude and perverse manners prevail, men have for God their belly, and they think of nothing but of enjoying themselves and passing idly the sunny days, and he is considered most holy who possesses most money; added to this we have

[1] *Epist.* 18.

Lupicinus the priest," etc. These reasons were sufficient to deter the saint from choosing his country for carrying out so lofty an aim of life amid company that was so low.

How harmful and inconvenient it is for a religious to live amid parents and relatives, and thus have continually brought before him the joys and sorrows, the homes and hearths of loved ones, is learnedly treated upon by the heavenly doctor in his *Epistle to Rusticus*, the monk, while experience has also manifested and proved its wisdom by many dire examples and sad falls. On the other hand, he turned his eyes to Rome, his new country, and he was not pleased either with that holy city as the chosen spot for his lofty aims in the Christian life, despite that they were humble in the eyes of the world. Because, although he should hold the holy city as such, and that she was enriched by sacred trophies and relics, so empurpled by the crimson blood of many martyrs. And witnessed in her the pure and sincere confession of the faith of those who had sown therein those fair seeds from Heaven sprung from that one grain which fell and died on this earth, in order that by means of so divine a fruit to cast a blessing upon the whole world. Yet, notwithstanding all this, it appeared to Jerome far removed from what the monastic life should be, thus to dwell amid such a multitude of men of varied conditions, nature, and foreign peoples as were to be found in Rome. It seemed to him that his life there would be far removed from the calm, sweet silence which should be cultivated in the secret of the spirit by such as desire to practise sanctity and interior justice, as the prophet Isaias describes, thus to see and be seen, to visit and be visited, from all which results manifestly a number of distractions and hindrances which impede the soul from seeking God, and desiring to do His holy will before all things. I cannot refrain from quoting here the words of

Jerome himself when, writing to Marcella and inviting her to his beloved Bethlehem, he addresses to her respecting these things in the following words: "Let us come to the town and hostel of Mary—since each one praises his own belongings. With what words or in what tongue shall I reverence and praise and depict this cave of the Lord, that crib wherein the infant Christ wept? It is better for it to be lauded by silence than by words, which must always be inadequate."[1] And farther on he adds: "Behold! for in this small cave in the land of Bethlehem was born the Maker of Heaven; it was here that He was wrapped in swaddling clothes; here was He visited by the shepherds; here did the star manifest Him, and here it was that the Magi adored Him! I firmly believe that it is a much holier place than the Tower of Tarpeia, for, having been many times struck by Heaven with its fire, shows that it is not very pleasing to God. I admit that it is there (in Rome) that the Holy Church dwells, that it holds the trophies and relics of the holy apostles and the martyrs, that there the true confession of Christ is made; it was there that the faith was preached by the princes of the Church, and on that spot paganism was trampled in the dust. Where day by day the name of Christian is being raised more and more on high; but, on the other hand, ambition, power, the grandeur of the city, to see and be seen, to salute and be saluted, the praises and murmurings, hearing them and speaking of them, and to be moving amid such a concourse of peoples, are all things very far removed from the monastic purpose and quietude. Because, if we sally forth to see and to speak to those who come to visit us, silence is lost, while if we do not go out we are held to be proud; and at times, in order to show ourselves polite and well-bred, we go forth to return the visits of

[1] *Epist.* 18.

those who have visited us, and thus have to cross their superb thresholds and doors, amid gilded colonades, and even to pass between lines of gossiping servants and slaves. But in this hamlet of Christ, as we said above, there is naught else to be found but a holy austerity, where the psalms are sung, and when these are ended naught is heard, all is silence, and whithersoever you may turn your eyes you will perceive that the labourer with his hand clenching the plough tills the land singing "*Alleluias.*" And in the midst of gathering the harvest the reaper, hot and weary from his exertions, arrests his labours to sing psalms; and he who, with hooked knife, is pruning the vines is heard hymning something of what David sang. This is the native music of this land, this the songs of love (as the people say) that rise up at all hours."

In view of the aforesaid, Jerome took the final resolution of withdrawing very far from these lands and seeking a habitation which should of itself raise the mind to spiritual things, and by its holy memories and dwellers invite to that perfection of life which a monk should aspire to. To no land in the world did these conditions seem to him to apply better than to the one which, by reason of so many mercies bestowed and so many favours received from heaven, had merited the renowned name of *Holy*, and therefore his final resolve was to make the Holy Land his dwelling-place.

It appeared to our blessed Jerome that for this so difficult undertaking it would be well to go provided with the necessary arms, and with the aids most adapted for his purpose, yet such aids would not be simply gold and abundance of silver, nor with a goodly supply of so-called necessaries of life such as food, apparel, slaves, and servants, but with a large collection of very good books, pious, instructive, and treating of highest per-

fection. Wherefore, he gathered together a large library, in order that in those vast solitudes where he purposed to end his days these books should be his companions. I believe myself that God put this scheme into his soul, and that it was His inspiration, because as He was training His Jerome to be a light to many monks and a pattern for enclosed hermits, and to be a support for the comfort of penitents, yet also to be a doctor of the Church—and such a doctor!—it was necessary that all his treasures should not consist solely of hair shirts, chains, disciplines, and pebbles, but that he should possess a good supply of sacred books and other good ones in order that, proceeding from one exercise to another, from prayer to study, from meditation to lessons, from penance and mortification to the highest contemplation—like to a cup of purest gold which from the crucible and the forge goes to the goldsmith's hammer, and from under the graver's tool and the file to the fire—he should come forth a masterpiece of such exquisite, highly finished work as we now behold him in the grand workshop of the Church!

These two things—Reading and Prayer—help each other most gallantly, because in prayer we speak to God, and there we reveal to Him our souls and place in His hands our miseries and weaknesses, and beseech Him that He should supply our deficiencies, cure, and heal us of our sicknesses. While in reading God speaks to us, He tells us His secrets, reveals to us His will, manifests to us His paths; thus, by both the one and the other things, the soul acquires what it cannot easily attain by any other way but by these two means. Hence if, with a pure heart, we approach the holy books, we will, without doubt, see in them what in truth it behoves us to know; but, as at most times we are carried to them by curiosity, vanity, ambition, and by that false thirst for knowledge in order that others

should know that we are learned, and also to be able to stand forward and cause an impression, and the world speak of us, therefore, we come out as blind as when we went in, and sometimes worse, for even of this divine science did the Apostle speak to the Corinthians: "Knowledge puffeth up, maketh us vain, and illudes us; he who is puffed up has nothing within but air, and this is the reason why most things end in smoke."

Were we to ask, as did this glorious father and doctor, raising our hands to heaven with purity of heart, and with tears, the faithful witness of the clean desire of the soul, for the light which is wanting to us, we should obtain that grace from God, as he drew forth light and instruction from the treasury of the holy scriptures, so sealed and closed to interpretation owing to the sins of men; there would not happen to us and to so many men that seeing we do not perceive, and hearing we do not understand, and reading we do not comprehend, for which reason does St. John tell us in his Revelations, "He that readeth, let him understand." And God Himself, His apostles and prophets, have in strong words threatened us with the punishments of this blindness and deafness.

For the love of God let us learn of our saint, and listen with him to that holy praise which the royal prophet applies to himself,[1] when he says that he had more prudence than all his enemies, and that he comprehended more than all those who taught him, and knew more than all the ancients; and all this knowledge he attained by looking attentively into the law, the precepts, and mandates of the Lord. Within three short verses did he inclose all the wisdom and science of men, which withstands the craft of the enemies, the skill and genius of the masters, or found in the lengthened experience of the old men; and there is

[1] Psalm cxxviii.

no other means of knowledge. Against these three he pits the attentive consideration and the holy study of the precepts, the testimonies, and mandates of God, which makes him prudent, learned, and wise. It was for this end that our doctor made such a costly and careful provision of books, which he collected together with so much labour, both as regards those he was able himself to obtain and which he transcribed by his own hand when he sojourned in Gaul, as well as those that by means of money, and by the help of his friends, he gathered together throughout Italy, and more especially in Rome. He dwells on this himself when, writing to Eustochium, he says that in the desert he had the library of books which in Rome he had gathered together with great diligence and labour. He mentions the same library in the *Epistle to Florentius*, where he says as follows:[1] "Do you know that, by the favour of Heaven, I have a large assortment of good books. Let us lend and ask each other at times for anything which you may desire. I will send it to you with right good will, without feeling regret in doing what you may demand of me." By these words it will be seen in passing that our doctor was not miserly, as is generally the case with great collectors of books, for, as they wish them to adorn their rooms, they grieve, if any of the books are wanting, on account of the deficiency it makes among the others. Having done this, either in part or on the whole, our saint proceeded to inform his parents of his purpose, in order to receive from them their blessing on this undertaking. I do not know whether he went alone or with his companions. Great indeed must have been the pleasure felt at his coming and for his visit, but when they heard of his determination of becoming a monk, that pleasure must have been marred, and sorrow and regret

[1] *Epist.* 22, cap. 18.

have entered their hearts; and although the saint does not record the difficult time he had with them on this occasion, it is easy to understand how painful it must have been. For who is there but can understand the feelings of a parent who, after bringing up his son, and he the eldest and the heir, that he should come to such an extreme resolution as that of leading a life in the wilderness? And what the feelings of the tender mother? Even when the beloved child happens to be the wild and troublesome one of the family? Yet what joy must not be theirs when they perceive their son return to them humble, obedient, discreet, and, above all, saintly? What will the parents of our great father do when they see him so determined upon undertaking so rough a life; and moreover, at such a distance, where it would take months to reach, encountering great perils of life, and from whence it would be only by a miracle that a letter could be received from him; and thus is it explained by the fact that among all his epistles there is not one for his mother or for his father?

Many must have been the pleadings of his parents to induce him to alter his resolution. And this opinion of mine is clearly defined from the determined words of the same holy doctor, which he writes to Heliodorus in the eloquent epistle (the first of his works) which he composed at the time when the farewells and departure from all things was still fresh in his mind, and where, among other subjects, he speaks as follows: "Although the baby nephew should cling to your neck, and your mother, with dishevelled hair, should show you her tender breasts whence you drew your nourishment; and despite that your father should cast himself on the threshold of the door—pass over him with tearless eyes, and fly to the Standard of the Cross, because to be cruel in this passage

of your life is not cruelty but signal piety." I imagine he speaks of himself, because at this time Heliodorus had no longer parents living, and therefore he adds farther on: "I know not what manacles are those which bind you and detain you; I, myself have not my heart so made of iron, nor my interior so strong, nor was I brought up among fierce tigers, nevertheless I have passed through as great an ordeal myself. Now, perchance, the widowed sister may cast her arms around your neck; now, perhaps, those servants who grew up with you in the house may tell you, 'Alas! Master! why are you leaving us? And whom do you leave in your place for us to serve?' Perchance the aged foster-mother who nursed you, and the venerable tutor, who holds the place of a second father, may complain, and cry out beseeching you to stay awhile and not leave them until you should have buried them; or your old nurse may come to you, and with gentle words speak to you the sweet words with which she invited you as a babe to her breasts; in a word, even if the whole house should, as it were, fall upon you, easily may you, with love divine and the fear of hell before you, break asunder all these ties and bonds." Who can fail to perceive in these words the vivid picture of what the saint must have passed through in regard to his parents, his brothers, his tutor and servants?

And, forasmuch as it comes to the point here, let us see what he says farther on, and how he replies to the arguments we suspect his father may have made use of. "The holy scriptures command that we should obey our parents: that is true; but he who loves them more than Christ loses his soul. The enemy stands with uplifted arm, knife in hand, to take life from me, and am I to stand thinking of the mother's tears? Am I to forsake the militia of Christ for my father, when even the precept of

burying them (which is a precept imposed by our Lord Himself and binds me to do), should it be in the way to prevent or delay me in following, I am not obliged to keep, nor do I owe it to them." From this may be seen how fully replied to are the complaints and reasons which parents may urge and represent to their children, and in order that to none may they be of effect, since they are of no value for those who are somewhat enlightened, unless it be such as through malice are vested in ignorance, let them know that on this point children are under no obligation to their parents, save under two conditions—one, that they be of age to be able, according to the holy institutions of the Church, to be subject to the laws of the state, as has been said; and secondly, that their parents be not placed in such need that without the help and succour of their children they should be unable to support life, because in such a case the natural precept of obedience and paternal duty is to be enforced. Beyond these two conditions there are no other obligations or rights; rather, as St. Bernard very clearly teaches, "God is the only lawful and necessary cause for not obeying parents, since our Lord Himself so clearly tells us that he who loveth father or mother more than Himself is not worthy of Him." And, indeed, greatly should parents rejoice who truly love their children when they see them rushing into the arms of the universal Father, for it is from Him that we have all that we possess, and from individuals and relatives have we inherited all that surrounds us of poverty and misery. This is that blessing which Moses conferred on the tribe of Levi, for by reason that it was consecrated to God had no other inheritance on earth but Him, saying, "Levi is he who hath said to his father and to his mother, "*I do not know you*, nor have I seen you"; and to his own brethren, "*I know you not*," and his very children he has not known.

These, Lord, are they who have kept Thy word and observed Thy covenant,"[1] an express figure of the religious and perfect men of the New Testament, who, forgetting all things and leaving all, gave themselves up entirely to God, and God gave Himself to all of them; and while they approached to Him, bound themselves with strong bands and pacts to the service of God.

I can never cease to admire the grandeur and majesty of the holy tongue which merely with the one word of the name of *Levi* expresses all this; and in itself encloses all that in an exact and most finished definition, the philosophers and theologians of the world (had they been gathered together) could have defined as a state of perfection; because in Hebrew the word "Levi" sounds equal to what in our language we should express by "closely to join in a firm friendly union," and be in companionship in every treaty and affair, and be in all things as "one only thing"; the proper business of those who in all truth could say with St. Peter: "Behold, Lord, we have left all things in order to follow and cling to Thee." The word and name of "Levi" springs from one root and verb which signifies to "put out to interest," and to lend to advantage and benefit, and in truth it is so, for he who in this way forms a company with God and leaves all for His sake, places all in a secure guardianship which is so safe that our Lord Himself assures him that He will repay an hundredfold.[2] Oh, infinite goodness! If such a word pledged us to an earthly prince, with what haste, and with what eagerness, would we not leave everything and go and serve him? But such is the fragile condition of man that he sets more credit on the things of the present life, and, which generally speaking, deceive and illude him, rather than confide in the actual Eternal Truth which

[1] Deuteronomy xxxiii. 8. [2] Matt. xix. 29.

only demands of him for this exchange faith and hope. This then is Levi, he who blessed Moses, he who, in truth, hoping and believing, places all his treasure in God, and leaves everything, and despoils himself of all things, and clings to and unites himself with God alone, and if from this solemn agreement he should separate himself, he would not be "Levi," but Leviathan which is the name of the serpent in whose commerce the only profit that is drawn is perdition, mourning, and weeping for evermore. This is what the word "Leviathan" signifies; and therefore God has threatened this ancient serpent by Isaias the prophet with the visitation of His sword, hard, great, and strong unto destruction, and it is evident that those also shall be included, each according to his guilt, who have designed to form a company with him in his deceits and snares. This knife it was which our doctor alluded to when writing to Heliodorus (as we have seen), he told him it were madness to listen to the laments of father and mother, when the sword of our enemy was uplifted over our head.

And so that we may bring these unjust complaints to an end, let us hear what this same Father writes in the Epistle *De Vitando suspecto Contubernio*[1] in which, among other deep and saintly reasons, he says as follows: "Should any one reprehend you, being a Christian (he is addressing a virgin), that you keep virginity, do not let this trouble you; and if you should be told that you had left your mother to enter a monastery in order to live among other virgins, let me tell you that these taunts are your praise; because, when in the maiden of the Lord there is no fault found in the delight she seeks after, which is holiness of life, this is no cruel thing but very great piety, because then you do not prefer your own mother,

[1] *Epist.* 47.

but He who commands you to prefer to her your own soul and life." And it is proper that this should be made known to be a holy and pious law, and well observed, not only in the time of our saint but also at the commencement of the Church, and even among the Gentiles previous to the knowledge of the true God, as appears in the case of the virgins consecrated to the goddess Vesta, when from not keeping their vows miserable falls and misfortunes happened, and breakings occurred in these holy virginal vases consecrated to God. By which is manifestly seen that such delicate vessels cannot be very safe where they are liable to meet with many encounters, for at the first blow they must immediately receive hurt. But let us pass on. Our saintly youth at length, fully determined to carry out his holy purpose, encountered all these trials and contentions with so brave a spirit that he conquered every difficulty, and, like a valiant soldier, he encouraged others to follow him and join the militia of Christ. He left father, mother, country, brethren, relatives, and all the luxury and delights of this life, and went forth, full of faith and hope, like to another and new Abraham to the place God had shown him. He determined to hasten his journey and undertake the voyage at once, employing all the haste he could, because in these first resolves and holy beginnings it is always dangerous to make any delays.

I am of opinion, judging by good conjectures, that Jerome was at the time twenty-three or twenty-four years of age; a happy commencement of his saintly period of *youth*, and from this time forward he begins to reveal to us very lofty aims.

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

On the first Journey which St. Jerome undertook to the Holy Land. The various Places he visited previous to entering the Desert.

The saintly youth left the house of his parents with the spirit of a man who had resolved never again to see it with his own eyes, and without turning to look back like one who takes hold of the plough, so as not to render himself unworthy of the kingdom which he proposed to win by the sweat of his brow. He left his parents with eyes brimming over with tears, as his own were dry. He passed over all tender feelings without being turned in the slightest degree from his purpose—running to win the battle which was to give him the victory. And as though he were quitting the captivity of Babylon and the power of Pharaoh, and as though he beheld already before him the resplendent column which effaced the darkness of the night, and the sight of the firstborn of Egypt dead, did he leave the comforts of life and, trusting solely to the voice of God Who called him, he passes dry-footed the sea, and journeys to the desert to offer himself in sacrifice to Him, and to receive that holy law which by straight paths shall place him in the Promised Land, and lead him to that longed-for Sabbath reserved for the happy times of the

Gospel. With him also departed the aforesaid friends—Heliodorus, Vincentius, Rufinus, and Hylas.

I am not able to state as a fact whether from thence he returned to Rome to gather together his library, or whether from Istria or Stridon they proceeded to take ship on the Adriatic Sea, though I believe the latter to be the more probable.

After sailing out, whether on account of a storm which overtook them in the gulf, or from some other reason, Rufinus withdrew from their company. This fact the saintly doctor himself gives us to understand in the Epistle which he wrote to him at Nitria, a city of Egypt, where Rufinus was at the time, because having been overtaken by the storm or shipwreck, or it might have been on the occasion when the merchants were going to Alexandria, he was carried along the whole of the Mediterranean ocean, passing the Sea of Ausonia and the Sea of Crete, and took refuge in the port of Alexandria as the saint tells him in this Epistle in the following words:[1] "After that the furious and sudden whirlwind which accompanied the storm had wrenched me from his side; after that hurried and sad parting had severed the bonds of love and charity[2] by which we were united; that very instant, I beheld the heavens and my own head as though enveloped in a black mantle, and in the storm-tossed ocean that I was engulfed I saw nought else but sea and sky. In a word, in that terrible voyage, the vessel was at the mercy of the elements, tossed here and there, carried along I know not where, but eventually to Thrace, and from thence to Pontus and to Bithynia, and after a lengthy circuit called at Galatia and Cappadocia, and finally passing the burning sands of Cilicia, exhausted by its heat it became imperative to reach Syria like one

[1] *Epist.* 41.

[2] Virg. *Æneid.*

who out of a terrible wreck reaches the port." In these brief words the saintly doctor has described his voyage, a lengthy dangerous journey, carried out of his course by a long circuitous route, passing many lands and barbarous peoples. And despite that St. Jerome, through wishing to describe briefly this voyage, does not mention having passed Constantinople, I believe, nevertheless, that he did not omit to call at its port, for it was the best route from Thrace to pass the Sea of Pontus and thence on to Bithynia which is the first province of Asia Minor. He passed on subsequently to Galatia and reached the city of Ancyra, which was the chief town of that province, and it appears he dwelt there for some days, from what he says in that most learned preface to the second book of his Commentaries on the Epistle of St. Paul, *Ad Galatas*, where he explains the origin and antiquity of the people of Galatia, and in passing, of many other provinces also (of which we purpose on some future day to treat). He describes the condition and customs of divers peoples, he gathers also information from the Epistles themselves of the Apostles and from the accounts narrated in the sacred scriptures. Thus of the Romans he says that they are firm in the faith and have great devotion and piety, furthermore, sincerity in obedience, but he also says of them that they are easy-going, proud, and arrogant. Of the Corinthians he describes them as somewhat vain, fond of personal adornment, curling their hair; and that the women are bold, going about with uncovered heads and loving admiration, and vainly gloried in the wisdom of the age, going so far as to deny the resurrection of the body. The Macedonians he praises as being charitable and given to hospitality, with paternal love, but nevertheless accuses them of being idle, pleasure-seeking people, frequenting each other's houses through idleness and a

wandering manner, finally he concludes by stating that the people of Galatia are barbarian, rude, and allow themselves to be easily deceived, and the saint adds: "Any one can see that this description of the apostle is a most clear fact, as was proved by such as went with me in the city of Ancyra, the metropolis of Galatia, because even down to the present day the city is rent and divided in a thousand ways by the schisms which prevail, and by the various dogmas and sects which reign there, a lost and devastated capital. I leave aside the Cataphrigæ, Ophitæ, Barboretæ, and Manicheans, for all now know the sad origin and history of these unfortunate names and sects." The words of our saint were attested in the Council of Ancyra, which was celebrated about the year of our Lord 508, in which the principal point treated on was against the practice of those who, through fear or violence, sacrificed to idols, or who mixed themselves up with the Gentiles in their sacrifices. This Council took place previous to the Council of Nicæa, and was not a universal but a synodal one, and was confirmed in the sixth general council celebrated in Constantinople. Of the language of the people the saint says at the end of the preface that it was not Greek but the same tongue as was spoken in the city of Trèves, situated in Germany on the banks of the Rhine. Whence it is clearly proved that the Galatians were people who had come from the north, comprehended by the general name of Gauls as all others who had come there to populate it, as we shall have occasion to explain farther on in our history.

From thence our saint journeyed on to Cappadocia. Later on, leaving the direct road which he had hitherto followed, he turned towards the south and came to Cilicia through desert paths, because the land of Cappadocia is very arid and without rivers, until Mount Tarpeia is reached,

which divides Cappadocia from the province of Cilicia. What constancy! What fervour of the servant of Jesus Christ, and what a yearning to find Him does he not manifest by all this arduous undertaking? By crossing lands and waters, this traversing of mountains, rivers, deserts, towns, this meeting of strange nations and barbarous races by a youth rich and brought up in all the luxury of wealth and position, yet leaving father, mother, and brethren, breaks all bonds and undertakes hard trials and pilgrimages in order to reach that land and tread the very earth which the Son of God had consecrated by His footsteps, seeking Him amid those loving relics and amid the actual traces of His precious blood which are left to us. The long peregrinations of Abraham and of Jacob with right good reason were celebrated in the divine Scriptures, yet not so much on account of the great difficulties encountered, nor by reason of the enormous distance traversed by these holy patriarchs as for the deep mystery and sacrament which they enclosed and typified. This being, as it were, the first proof of that faith and obedience which we owe to God and to His promises; but if we compare these journeyings with those of our glorious father, they are small and of lesser difficulty, and the fervour of love divine which burned in his breast, the devotion and the desire, I dare to say was not less than in respect to the first, because to my mind it is no lesser thing for God to create in His Church a father and a doctor than to raise a patriarch for the faith in the synagogue of the ancient people. I leave aside the advantage which the saints of the New Testament enjoy above those of the old law, and the greater abundance of grace, of gifts and riches of those whom Isaias and St. Paul declare, that "neither eye hath seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered in the breast of man to conceive what things God has prepared for those

who follow Him," which is understood not only as regards the future life, but of the present golden age of the New Testament, which is what our divine Lord implied on other occasions, when He gave us to understand the grandeur of this glorious state: "Oh how many kings and prophets have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them!" Yet even should we put aside this consideration, which is so manifest, how much greater are the saints of the New Testament than those of the Old, looking at them thus point by point, and comparing the things of our saint with those of the holy fathers, for his peregrinations, his faith, his great charity, his ardent desires are not in a single point less than were theirs. It may appear to such as judge superficially that this journey was an affair of small account; but to me who have experienced what these peregrinations are in reality, and what it is to pass across peoples and kingdoms, tongues, and barbarian nations, incredulous and furious, will perceive what great ardour, what courage and strong determination in the service of God are needed to overcome so many difficulties as are met with.

At length the holy man came to Cilicia, and with the love of the Apostle St. Paul he tarried some days in the province, principally in the city of Tarsus, the native place of that "*clear trumpet of the Holy Ghost*"; and as he was so prudent and observant in all he did, urged by the desire of improving himself on every occasion, he took advantage of his sojourn there to acquire the idiom of the province, the correct mode and phrases of speech, as is clearly manifested in the Epistle which he wrote to Algasia, where, in the 10th question, among other things he says as follows:[1] "That which we have often said, that which the Apostle

[1] *Epist.* 151.

St. Paul declares,[1] albeit not very erudite in the wording, but very much so in wisdom, and which he spoke not through humility, but because he in truth felt it so, now, I myself affirm and approve. Because these deep thoughts of his could not be explained by the tongue; and feeling the good and comprehending what he says that he could not put them in such exactitude of expression or propriety of words to suit the ears of his hearers. In the Hebrew language (for after all as a Hebrew himself, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a most learned man), he was well skilled, but as regards Greek, when he wished to declare himself in that language, he is rather obscure. And if this occurs in the Greek to one who was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, and who studied the language in his early years, what shall we say of the Latins, who fatigue themselves translating his sentences word by word only that they may leave them more obscure, similarly to the weeds which, growing up, choke the fertility of the crops? Farther on he adds: "Many words occur in the apostle's writings which are in use in the dialect of his province and of his city." He then proceeds to quote some passages, as examples, in his Epistle, which we leave aside as unnecessary to the purpose of our work, which is to make manifest the diligence of the saint, and therefore what has been said suffices.

From all this is seen his great diligence, by which the Church later on so greatly profited, and also proves that these journeyings and peregrinations were not undertaken (as in the case of others) for amusement sake; but were of such importance and advantage and usefulness that it is manifest that in all things God was leading him by the hand, and as though training and exercising him, in order that later on he should yield glorious results for the benefit of His Church.

[1] 2 Corinth. xi. 6.

From Tarsus he passed on to Antioch, again traversing Mount Taurus. He remained some time in that city, where he established a friendship with the learned and saintly priest Evagrius, as appears in the Epistle he wrote to his friend Florentius. And while he lingered here he pondered on what spot and place he should retire to so as to carry out his purpose of leading the life of a monk and a solitary — in what desert, and who should be his companions, what conveniences he should adopt as best for his aim and purpose of life. It so happened, as I gather from the Epistle which I shall later on quote, that either from the desert of Syria, which is not far distant from Antioch, there came some servants of God to this city, or else that the holy man himself went there (which seems to me more probable), and held a conference with them, among others being one called Theodosius. He communicated to them his purpose and determination how greatly he desired to follow that rule, and the vow he had made, and the longings he had to undertake at once this life. Who can doubt that they encouraged him in this enterprise, inflaming his heart with the wings of desire to fly to that desired nest and greatly-sought-for rest? But whereas to the inferior part of the soul there were represented to him so vivid and difficult an encounter, and the issue of the battle so doubtful, foreseeing as he did the trials which were set before him in that desert, he refused the contest. And there would be depicted to him such great and overwhelming difficulties, similarly as had happened to the cowardly explorers of the sons of Israel, in view of the inhabitants of the land of promise, who became terrified at the bravery and stature of those armed men of Canaan and the Philistines, despite he had within his breast the valour of a Joshua and of the brave Caleb (the one means *salvation* and the other *brave heart*, like to a

lion); yet he would not trust to his own powers, but in the power of God, and thus he was minded to write a letter to those saintly anchorites, full of loving desires, of profound sentiments of humility and divine confidence, and addressed it to the holy monk Theodosius, in which he expresses himself in this wise: "Oh, how I long to find myself in your holy congregation and admirable company! And although these eyes of mine be not worthy to behold this, I will nevertheless embrace this life with all joy and contentment. I will gaze on that desert with more delight than on the most beautiful of cities, and contemplate those places bereft of inhabitants, but wherein are gathered together, as in a paradise, these companies of saints. But as my sins are no doubt the reason whereby I may not be allowed to be a participator or enjoy such holy company, I beseech of you that by means of your holy prayers (as I doubt not you will be able to obtain it), I may be rescued from the darkness of the age. In regard to what in your presence I had stated already, and in the desire which I cease not now to declare to you by letters, my soul and my desires are resolved upon to carry out. It now devolves on yourselves that the will should be followed by the effect. Mine indeed is the wish; but that I should carry out what I desire must be left to your prayers. I am nothing else but a weak, infirm sheep, which has strayed from the fold, and if the Good Shepherd does not receive me and carry me on His shoulders to return me to the sheep-fold I must remain in the pitfall, and the more I may try to rise all the more my feet will slip and I shall go down the lower. I am that prodigal son who has wasted the goods and the portion which my Father gave me. I have not yet returned to cast myself at His feet, nor have I shaken off the remembrance of an easy life, and the sensuality of my early days; and by what it appears I

have not withdrawn myself from the vices, but only seem to wish to do so. Hence the enemy strives to bind me down with fresh cords, ever bringing forward new impediments, and labours to surround me as by a sea of difficulties and confusions in order that on every side I should be encircled by the waves, while I, thus placed in the centre of this element, can neither turn back nor take a step forward. Thus it only remains to me, that by means of your prayers to awaken in me the breath of the Holy Spirit, so that I may bestir myself and move on with efficacy until I touch the port and desired shore."

From this letter can be seen what were the burning flames which were shooting from the heart of this saintly youth, and from the last words is perceived when he states that he cannot turn back, that he had made a vow to become a monk. And we also discover what diligence the devil must have employed to prevent him from carrying out his saintly purposes. Nor was St. Jerome idle during his stay at Antioch whilst awaiting the decision to depart for the desert, and finish stripping himself of all the impediments which still kept him rooted to the world. He occupies himself in holy study, and ventured to try his pen and genius on a Commentary of the sacred scriptures, selecting for his subject the prophet Obadiah. And whereas he had acquired the style of the Greek writers, and all respecting Origen pleased him, for he was the father of allegorical and mystical manner of speech, whom most of the current writers of that time imitated, he likewise followed his style. This, however, he greatly deplored having done, as we shall see farther on, and called it ignorance and boyish silliness.

In order that we should see how well he describes this, and what he thinks of this manner of expounding the sacred letters, forasmuch as he possessed a very

excellent doctrine for restraining bold minds who, as soon as they learn a few letters, and even without so much as learning them, at once attempt to touch the sacred scriptures, and in place of expounding and illustrating, rather darken and debase them by their Commentaries, I wish to quote here some passages from his Proem on Obadiah, which he sent to his friend Pammachius, and which occur at the commencement. "When I was little," he says, "I spoke like a child, I knew things as a boy and thought like a boy; and now that I am a man I put aside all that was boyish. Hence if the Apostle goes on improving, and day by day forgetting the past, stretches forth forward, and, according to the precept of the Saviour, placing his hand on the plough does not stop to turn back, how much more must I who have not yet attained man's perfect state, nor have 'come to the measure of the age of Christ,' deserve pardon, if, urged on by the ardour and desires of the sacred letters, I in my youth dared to explain, in an allegorical sense, the prophet Obadiah, of whose words I neither in those days understood the letter nor the historic sense? My soul was burning with the pleasure of the spiritual understanding, and, because I had read that all things are possible to him who believes, I did not observe how varied are the impulses and gifts of the Holy Ghost. I had a knowledge of human letters, and so I thought that I could read the sealed book."

Farther on he adds: "I had thought that what I had written was packed away in my presses, and that what my genius had with temerity dared to do I had consigned to the fire; but when least I bethought it there came a youth from Italy with the actual original which I had written so many years back. He praised very much the little work, and I confess I greatly marvelled, seeing that

however foolish one may write there is never wanting one of the same humour to read it. He praised the little work to the skies while I bent down my head in astonishment. He set little less than in heaven its mystic sense, and I cast my eyes to the ground in shame at my interpretation. Perchance, think you, albeit I may say this, that I condemn those exercises of my youth? No, undoubtedly not. We know that in the Tabernacle of the Lord by the side of gold there was also offered the hair of goats; and in the Gospel we read that the two little coins of the poor widow were more acceptable than the large offerings of the rich! We gave in those days what we had, and now if we have profited somewhat we will likewise return it to the same owner, because by the grace of God I am what I am, for I do not deny that for thirty years I have worked in this holy exercise and labour." He afterwards adds: "This was in the time when my Pammachius, more loved than the light, my dear Heliodorus and myself were together engaged in trying to be inhabitants of the burnt-up desert of Syria. What I had judged secret has been made public. I will therefore return to examine the old footprints, and amend the badly-formed strokes of my letters. I was a child. I knew not how to write, my hand shook, and I did not properly set my fingers. However, even should I not have derived advantage in aught else, I at least can say truly what Socrates learnt—"*I know that I do not know.*"

Thus do we behold how this saintly youth spent his time, and the journey he had made. Now we have him on the point of running a match with the old and common enemy; because of the three enemies we may well say that as regards the two, viz., the world and the flesh, he has treated them badly, for the one he has dragged to the ground and the other he has severely punished. Because

for a youth who has been delicately nurtured, rich, noble, prudent, learned, beloved of his parents, and esteemed by his relatives, to fling all down under his feet, forgetting and despoiling himself so completely of all things, in order earnestly to embrace the cross of Christ, and seek the science which disillusions and does not puff up, is in truth to have done much, for to commence so well is to have already more than done half the work.

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

St. Jerome goes to dwell in the Desert. What manner of Life he led there. The great Penances he performed.

In that region of Asia which is called Syria, and, according to others, Asisia, but now generally called Suria, there is a province, one of the many into which it is divided, which goes by the name of Syria-Coele, so called because it is situated in a half-crooked circle between the two mountains of Libanus and Antilibanus, and which is called by Pliny Decapolis.[1] It is also divided into small districts; in one of these, called Chalcidice, is a very fertile region, a habitable land, and enjoys a very equable climate, neither in winter is the cold very great nor in the summer is the heat excessive. Towards the eastern part of this province there is an extensive rugged desert not habitable for men, being the proper dwelling of wild beasts and of serpents, which infest and abound there in great numbers. This desert marks the limit and boundaries between Palestine and Syria-Coele. To this wild region did the brave servants of Jesus Christ fix their abode, called and led thither by the secret impulse of the Holy Spirit, without fearing it, but rather to the contrary, fleeing from the pomp, vanity, and the pleasures and comforts of the world, and take refuge in this retired

[1] Strabo, Pliny, Mela.

sanctuary, considering less dangerous the companionship of asps than the company of men.

Many servants of God dwelt there, in some little cells or huts, but at considerable distance from each other, and spread about that desert, fearless of danger, without apprehension, forgetful of the world, and attending solely to the salvation of their souls; a source of edification and joy to the blessed in heaven, scorning the vanity of the children of Adam, and weeping over the follies of sinners. Among these holy anchorites of the desert was that venerable Theodosius, to whom reference has been made, to whom he had addressed his letter; and to him he oftentimes gave an account of his designs. Jerome tore himself away with his companions Heliodorus, Innocentius, and Hylas, severed all bonds which were inconvenient, and with resolute spirit proceeded to this roughest of deserts to make themselves new inhabitants of it, and to become the companions of the wild beasts, while their souls enjoyed the fellowship of angels!

From hence we commence to look upon a new man, a most novel course for a future doctor of the Church to adopt, and we shall depict the life of a singular anchorite; and therefore I have somewhat to alter the line of proceeding in this history, because up to this stage, in all that I have recounted of his affairs, I have contented myself with referring simply to his words, in order to make clear and verify what I have said. Now in this part I do not wish to continue this course, but taking his words and what of himself he briefly recounts as my text, and, as it were, the foundation, I will make such observations upon them as I shall deem proper. And whereas in this part there are many noteworthy things which it would be grievous to crowd together in one discourse, I will divide them in order, according to their kind.

In the first place, I will treat here on the order of his life and his exercises. Secondly, I will declare the strong temptations which he suffered, and the contests and wrestlings he had with the devil.

With reference to the first, the holy doctor himself tells us many things in divers places in his works; and in the renowned Epistle which he wrote to the virgin Eustochium on *Virginity*, desirous of instructing her as to the care she should have in rejecting the thoughts with which in the spiritual life the devil always endeavours to assail the soul with great force in order to prevent any advantage being gained, and also to frighten beginners, he expresses himself in this wise—and as these words are a very apposite doctrine I quote them: "I do not wish you to allow your thoughts to assume proportions. Do not allow any one thing of Babylon to gain the mastery over you. As regards the enemy, where he shows himself of small account you must cut him down; you must deprive him of the malice of his tares to prevent their growth, and in the seed he must be stamped out and slain. Listen how the Psalmist expresses it: 'Daughter of Babylon! you hapless one! Blessed is he who should repay you for what you gave us, and treat you as you treated us. Blessed is he who should take your little ones and dash them against the stone.'"[1] I do not wish here to make any other observation, but beseech such as in good earnest have commenced to take the journey onwards, and who assume to have left the wide road along which so many walk to the loss of their souls, in order to enter the door and narrow path of life, to take this counsel of St. Jerome very much to heart, and by continual diligence examine their thoughts, and keep watch lest, if they allow themselves to be carried away by them, and as though asleep they do

[1] *Epist.* 21.

not watch what is passing within, that which in the beginning was small, imperfect, and as though of little strength like to a babe, in a very short time will grow to be a giant in power—then assumes the mastery, takes undivided possession, and so thoroughly becomes united to the soul that it cannot be borne, and brings forth offspring of perdition and of death. From which results that in order to wrest the prize from the hands of the evil one no one human created weapon suffices, but only can it be done by the powerful hand of God." In this advice is comprehended nothing less than the loss or gain of the blessed life; for which reason does the Psalmist say: "Blessed will be he who shall dash to death her little ones," and the Hebrew word which is here interpreted *blessed* is in the text expressed in the plural in this wise—*blessings on him who shall thus act*, because glory is a good enclosing many goods together, and all depends upon the beginning, which at first sight is as small as is the rejection and resistance offered and made against a small thought. The saint did not say, neither as a matter of fact does the Psalmist say, *prevent them*, because that is not at present in our hand to do; and thus the saint at once follows, saying in his Epistle, "It is impossible that in the thought and sense it should not touch the native heat of the veins and of the sensitive part; but he shall be praised and styled *blessed* who, as soon as the smallest thought presents itself of this, at that very instant he cuts off the head of the evil thought, and breaks it on the stone, and the stone is Christ."

So that the virgin Eustochium should have an illustration of this doctrine put to the test, the saint himself affords her his own example, humbly confessing all that he had suffered and experienced in himself, in these words: "Oh, how often, when living in the desert, in that ex-

tensive solitude, which, dried up by the burning rays of the sun, offered a frightful dwelling-place to the monks, it seemed to me that I was in the midst of the pleasures of Rome."

Here in these brief words the saint has revealed to us his abode, bereft of all the comforts which are needed for the miserable life of man! The ground dry and burnt up, without a vestige of verdure, no plants, no trees to afford a shade from the noonday heat. There were no towering cedars, no luxuriant palms, nor stately trees affording fruit, pleasing the eye by their beauty, no running waters, no refreshing streams to cool the air and afford a soothing murmur to the ear, no kind of rest or refreshment,—in a word, a desert very much deserted of men. I mean men whose desires go no farther than the earth, yet as such even do not seek so unfertile a land. Here, indeed, did this great man fix his dwelling-place, he who pretends to no one thing of earth. Here did that divine youth imprison himself of his own free will, and here did that clear light of the Church bury the best and most flourishing days of his life, fully resolved upon spending it all here, had Heaven not designed otherwise, and brought him forth for the good of the world to be its great and most brilliant beacon of light. Nevertheless, we might well say that although the body was as a fact in so rough a place, yet the soul was in the enjoyment of supreme delight! Oh, divine mercy of the Lord! With what skill and care dost Thou chisel the life of the saints! What colours and what shades dost Thou impart to them! What lights and shadows! what backgrounds far away and what near views dost Thou not reveal to us, at once so varied and so beautiful! Who can doubt that in a soul so full of good intentions, so full of fervent desires, and practising such vigorous penance, that he must have carefully watched over his

thoughts, and must have kept vigilance such as we have signified above? For he adds and declares that despite that he dwells in a spot so far removed from every comfort and pleasure, yet oftentimes did there rise before his eyes the delights and satisfactions found in the society of Rome! What a lively diligence must the enemy have exercised in this warfare! What haste did he not employ to arouse in the saint all the species of his fantasy, and represent vividly to him in that hidden spot what in other days he had witnessed in the world of gaiety! Hence, he farther on affirms that his soul and his heart were full of sadness and bitterness! "I walked about," he says, "and lived alone, withdrawn from all, because I was full of bitterness. My limbs were cold, fleshless, stark dry with the hair shirt and the rough habit. My skin was coarse, blackened from the burning rays of the sun, turned into an Ethiopian. My eyes continually flooded with tears, for I sighed and sobbed without ceasing. If at times I was overcome by sleep—against which I offered constant resistance—my bed was the bare ground, and my weary bones and limbs were racked." Here he has manifested to us his dress, and revealed to us what his bed was. He has graphically described it all to us, and well indeed was his miserable body brought down to the dust. Yet how easily does he recount it all! and how difficult is all this to be carried out! How light all this appears written down, or read about in the person of a third individual, yet how almost insupportable does it all become when put into practice.

I do not say this as regards the very fact, which is great and extraordinary, and little less than unapproachable, but it is true even of other and lesser acts, lighter and easier to bear, which if we but attempt to practise them for the space of a month, or even for a week, it appears to us that we can compare them to the greatest

and the heaviest of mortifications, and have no fear, and not even shame to class them among rough and penitential acts. To our saint, on the contrary, all seems to him little. He himself deems that he does nothing, and is worth nothing—this being proper of such as perform great things and of great worth.

Greatly does it come to the purpose in respect to the revelation of our great penitent that about living solitary, of being clothed in haircloth, and of sleeping on the ground and in the dust—those words of the prophet Jeremias in his Lamentations: "It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth. He shall sit solitary and hold his peace, because he shall take it upon himself. He shall put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope."[1] It seems as though the prophet vividly depicts him. Let us see how our own doctor declares it himself, for there is no need to seek far into the Commentary. "The perfection of a soldier of Christ," he says, "is to have his soul despoiled of all affairs of the world and of the turmoil of the age. According to what the Apostle tells us, *No one who stands beneath the standard of God entangles himself in the things of the age* (and what else he adds); rather he endeavours, as far as human weakness permits him, to unite himself with Christ in all diligence.

"This rule of life, and this manner of procedure, must be the endeavour of all good monks to imitate, who by vow have bound themselves to the monastic life. But this mercy of God and this gift of perfection is rarely given, and only to the few; because that man is truly in every part perfect who, whether he be in the desert, or in the strictness and hardship of solitude, or in the monastery, endures with even spirit the weaknesses of his brethren.

[1] Lament. Jeremias, iii. 27, 28, 29.

Hence it is a difficult matter to find any one who in both professions is perfect, because neither can the solitary so easily attain the perfect contempt of all material things, nor he who lives the common life the purity of contemplation. What advantage, nevertheless, exists in the rigour of the solitary calm life to that of the busy bustle of the age is well known to such as have experienced it." Farther on, after commenting on the advantage of the contemplative life over the active one, he adds: "Here he puts his mouth in the dust, he who, feeling himself lowly, is fully aware that he is weak, and that, like a thing that is made of dust, confesses that he has to return to dust, saying with the patriarch Abraham: *I will speak with my God and Lord, whereas I am but dust and ashes.*" Then a little farther he says: "To the reprobate and perverse city our Lord Himself in the gospel declared that had Tyre and Sidon witnessed and seen performed the things that had been done in her, without doubt they would have done penance in ashes and haircloth. By the haircloth is signified the sharpness of sorrow for sin, in ashes the dust of the dead. In penance both are joined, because by the pricking of the hair-shirt we should be made aware of what by sinning we have committed, and in the embers of the ashes we should contemplate what we come to by sin. Let us therefore ponder, and witness in the hair-shirt the prickings of the vices, and in the dying embers of the ashes of death let us meditate on the just punishments due to our faults. And forasmuch as after the sin there followed up the ignominious things of the flesh, let man behold in the roughness of hair-shirt what he had committed by his haughty pride, and let him see in the ashes to what an extreme depth of misery he had fallen by sinning. Another signification may also be applied, viz., in the hair-shirt we see repentance, reprehension, and the sorrow

of contrition, according to what Job said: "I myself reprehend my own self, for it is nothing less than a sharp pricking of the hair-shirt that which passes within my soul, rubbing itself with the sharpness of the feeling; and in ashes he does penance, because with wide-open vision he observed what had followed from the sentence passed on the first crime; and he cries out, I do penance on embers and ashes, which in truth is to say clearly I do not puff myself with pride for any gift which I may have received from my Maker, because, having been made of dust through the penalty I incurred, I find myself returning into that very dust again."

All this is of the saint, and these thoughts were those which clad him in the haircloth he speaks of here. These, and other similar things which he had in his heart, were those which placed him in so rough an abode, which rendered his limbs fleshless, and that his emaciated body should have no other rest but that afforded him by a bed on the hard, bare ground. It is thus that refined penance is performed; it is thus that God is served; in this way do those act who are to be qualified to become such great saints as Jerome; in this way are brought up and trained doctors of the Church, and in this way are worked the samplers of Christian perfection. Now after having seen what his couch, apparel, dwelling, and the exercise of his life were, let us see what his food was. Farther on he says in the same Epistle: "Of the food and drink I will keep silence, forasmuch as the invalid monks drink naught but cold water, and it is held a luxury to eat anything cooked."

And therefore, O glorious father, you did not wish to tell us what your food was? You did well, because it would either frighten us or it would be incredible! The note suffices for us, and the rhetorical insinuation tells us

enough. If the sick and the weak lived in this manner, what about the strong and those considered robust?

A marvellous thing! above human strength, and impossible of imitation, save by the especial assistance of heaven!

In this Epistle[1] the same doctor tells us he had seen three orders of monks in Egypt, some who in their language were called *Sauses*, and in the Latin *Cenobitae*, and in the vernacular *men who live in community*. Others were called *Anachoretes*, deriving their name from the flight, and withdrawing from the conversation of men, and living about in the deserts. The third were called *Rembotes*, the lowest grade of monks. These lived in cities and towns, a few here and there, two or three together, as they listed. They did manual labour for their support, and even for profit; and, as though the art or trade pursued were in itself holy, and not the life itself, it was to be done for a greater price and be of more value than what others sold. Putting these aside, the same doctor says, "Let us speak of the Cenobitae who live in common." He describes their life and holy custom, their obedience, humility, charity, and brotherly love which they had one towards the other; and although they led a rough life, yet when they were ill, he says, they were moved into another larger cell, where they would be so cared for and petted by the elder monks that they neither missed the comforts of the city nor the blandishments of their mothers. According to this description, a far stricter life was followed by the monks of the desert of Chalcis than by the Egyptians, for even in sickness they were not permitted to eat anything cooked.

In the life of St. Paul, the first hermit, our doctor recounts that here in this very desert where he abode

[1] *Epist.* 22, cap. 15.

there were found monks practising admirable abstinence; among others he says he saw two, one who had passed thirty years in a small cell without eating but a little barley bread and drinking a little muddy water, and the other lived inside an old cistern, eating during the whole day but five figs. This, says the saint, will appear impossible to those of little faith, who do not attain to grasp the fact that there is nothing impossible to believers.

From this I infer that, as our monk will not tell us what his food and drink was, it must have been something similar to what he describes, but that he did not wish to frighten the virgin Eustochium, a dainty, wealthy maiden at the time, or else so that it should not appear as though he were attempting to vaunt his sanctity and abstinence, and passes it over in silence, only telling us in a round-about way by stating that even the invalid and the weak did not touch food that was cooked, and considered among them as luxury. Under what class are we to rate our daintiness? With what courage or face shall we dare to call ourselves his children, who are so far removed from this great abstainer? And how classify the gluttony of the fine things of the world when, not content with what is good and reasonable, men strive to force the appetite to take the costly banquets which gluttony invents?

Nevertheless, Jerome was not brought up less daintily than the daintiest of the world, nor can we say that the nature of his birth impelled him, because he himself condemns this as being vicious, and declares that its inhabitants made a god of their bellies. It was the strong resolution to work penance that spurred him on, and will do so in regard to all such who embrace it in the spirit of a Jerome.

Now that we have seen something of the outward and bodily macerations, let us pass on to view the things of

the interior life. He says, farther on in the same Epistle: "But I, who through the fear of hell had condemned myself to such a prison, making myself a companion of scorpions and of wild beasts, nevertheless often did it seem to me that I was in the midst of balls and in the society of maidens. The pale countenance induced by long fastings, the cold body, and the flesh as it were dead, would seem to flush up with burning desires." Oh, what a holy confession this of Jerome's, rising from a heart perfectly humble! For without duplicity he publishes his weakness and reveals his misery! For if we consider the case well we shall find that the temptation was most strong and the encounter with the devil very terrible; and it was by special divine permission that the leave which in the case of Job was not granted to the enemy, should, in regard to Jerome, be allowed him.

God said to the Adversary that He should permit him to try Job with any trials he might wish; deprive him of his property and of his children; allow him to be affronted by his own wife and scorned by her; his friends to make war to him and contradict him; to wound him with grievous sores from head to foot, but that he should not touch his soul. I am well aware that many, following Olympiodorus, declare of this passage that it is interpreted or understood by soul to be the life, and that God did not forbid the enemy in this act anything else but that he should not kill him, and the Hebrew word seems to favour this interpretation; nevertheless the exposition of Didymus is very good, as it explains that the prohibition of not touching his soul implied that he should not be able to set before him illusions or phantoms, nor impure or foul imaginations. This is a class of very powerful temptations, which to overcome with perfection was reserved for the law of grace, after the coming of Jesus Christ, and of

the descent of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men, and hence the Lord Himself told the Jews that not one of them kept the law which had been given them by Moses, of which David sang in the Psalm xviii., "*Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord, and I shall be cleansed from the greatest sin*," understanding by the *greatest sin* that which the apostle calls *body of sin*, because it includes all, and is like to a poisoned spring, which, as soon as the imagination touches it with the foul object of covetousness and concupiscence, it at once bubbles up, conceives and brings forth sin, and behind it the death of the soul; and forasmuch as the devil is powerful for stirring up these species conceived by the senses (if permission be given), and represents them to the soul, where virtue is weak, he easily wins the victory, because in the kingdom of death he is king.

And whereas all this has its beginning in the soul, whilst it exercises the office of animating the inferior part by giving it life (which in Hebrew is called *nephes*), it can easily be understood that when God forbade Satan to touch the soul of Job, it was that he should neither take his life nor set imaginations in the sensitive part. What haste he made to exercise St. Jerome in the other temptation with which he afflicted holy Job, we shall see as we go on. To weary with various illusions, foul representations, impure memories the holy soul of our courageous and strong monk, is what he here reveals to us, in all which he exceeded holy Job. If the remedies he employed have been good up to this, and which he has made known to us, let those speak who have had some experience of similar maladies and of their cures. But the enemy was so strong and so constant in the battles, and in the assaults he gave the soul so importunate, that they did not suffice, and then, as a last resource, he acted as he

describes to us in these words: "Thus finding myself abandoned by all relief, I would cast myself at the feet of Jesus, and, bathing them with my tears, would wipe them with my hair, and my rebellious flesh I tamed down by fasts of whole weeks' duration."

Two remedies has the holy penitent declared here, both of great efficacy; with the one Magdalen delivered herself of seven devils, which is the same as to say of many vices, and from the celestial feet of the Master she came forth whiter than the snow, according to what David sings, for those who are washed by so good a hand exceed in whiteness the snow. The other is fasting. He well manifests the reason for his silence as to what his food was, as we have seen above, because fasts which are prolonged for weeks together do not appear to belong to the life of men, but are proper only of angels; and it is by means of these that not only the servants of God, but even great sinners have attained signal victories over their enemies. Upon the verse of Psalm cviii., "*My flesh is changed for oil*,"[1] the holy doctor says: "When we fast, when our faces turn yellow, when we appear unsightly, let us be persuaded in ourselves that then we appear most beautiful to Christ. Soldiers who fast are those He desires and loves; let our support and provision be the fast itself. And why so? Because in it is victory, and in victory triumph!" Notwithstanding all this, God did not wish that it should be of avail to Jerome, nor that with them should cease the force of the combat, in order that it should be his valour, because it is to brave men that God assigns more audacious undertakings, since to them He will give larger crowns; hence it is imperative that they should practise and add above the common and ordinary acts of virtue other higher exercises.

[1] Caro mea immutata est propter oleum.

Then he adds: "I am not ashamed in confessing the misery of my lot; rather do I weep because I am not now what I was formerly. I call to mind how oftentimes, when calling and praying to Heaven, I joined day with night, and did not cease to strike my breast until, by command of the Lord, my soul would be calmed." After the rough habit, after sleeping on the ground and racking his dry bones, after the fasts of many weeks, after the abundance of tears shed at the feet of Christ, there followed, in the exercises of our saint, such lofty prayer, so constant and fervent, that it equalled the course of the sun with that of the stars, persevering in this prayer night and day, in order that the whole of the heavens and planets should be the witnesses of such unusual virtue. This is what St. Athanasius dwells upon so urgently, and with reason, in the life of St. Anthony, when in the evening he placed himself in prayer, his back turned to the west, and he persevered thus until the sun, rising in the east, cast its rays on his eyes; meanwhile that the saint himself would feelingly complain of the swiftness of the sun's course because it disturbed the sweet slumber in which he enjoyed God in so lofty a meditation.

The very same experience does our saint declare he had, for oftentimes did he join day to night. And who can tell, if God, complying some time or another to the pleadings of such men as these, may not have detained the course of the sun, so that it should not disturb them with its rays, meanwhile that they overcame their enemies and gained the victory in so high a combat as is done in prayer, since there is no one thing which can so break down the force of the adversary as by prayer? And this servant of God well knew what an efficacious remedy prayer is for all our evils, and, as such, he employed it as his continual exercise. This was the principal business

of his life, his sustenance, his food, and in it there is no solitude, no desert—the whole life spent in it is a paradise. This is the defensive and the offensive weapon; with it are resisted every encounter, and with it is the enemy wounded, and the soul is cured of all pains, and comes forth out of all its difficulties, as is briefly declared by the same Father when writing to the widow Salvinia.[1] "Never let the holy lesson drop from your hands, and let prayer be always so continued that all the shafts of the thoughts by which youth is generally combated be resisted with this shield." And so that prayer be not alone, he tells us it was accompanied by fasting, which are two wings with which the soul flies. These two assist one another so powerfully that there is no class of demons, however pertinacious and obstinate, which cannot be cast out by them, according to the doctrine of the Saviour, by the mouth of St. Matthew.[2] To this he also joined the chastisement of the body and the striking of the breast with a stone, imitating the Publican, who, although he shamefacedly called with these knocks at the doors of divine mercy from afar, yet was heard from the distance sooner than the Pharisee, who was close by. With the pains of his bodily wounds he startled away the softness and the delight of the evil thought, which, rising from the sensitive part to the rational, was, like a bad serpent struck on the head by the stone, and fell to the ground, and, as the Psalmist said, broke the little ones of Babylon by dashing them on the rock, and, by dint of these blows, introduced Christ into his heart, and at His incoming cast out all cares and thoughts of this world.

Hence, with right good reason the man who ponders on this cannot but perceive that this saint has been set as a sampler before the eyes of all the faithful, and as a

[1] *Epist.* 9.

[2] Matth. xxvii.

living example, his picture and image, nude and in the desert, striking his breast with the stone, is reproduced and presented to us oftener than that of any other saint. Because, as he says in the Epistle which I have just quoted,[1] the breast is the root and spring of all our evil thoughts, and there is the seat of the heart whence are conceived, according as our Lord teaches us, the evils which render us abhorrent in His presence. And the saint goes farther in his description, discovering things of his exercises and life, and concludes summing up in admirable and extraordinary words: "My little cell, as though it were something that knew my thoughts, I actually dreaded, and thus I was with myself angry and stern, and I would go out alone and wander far into the deserts, until I would find some deep valley, some rough wood or broken cliff, and there I remained, making it my place of prayer and the wretched dwelling for my body. I set God as my witness, that after many tears, after keeping my eyes fixed on Heaven for a great while, then it would seem to me that I found myself in the midst of the choir of angels, and then, full of joy and delight, I would sing: 'I will run *after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments.*'" A happy ending and a blessed finish to the tears, the prayers, and the fastings is this which Jerome here reveals to us. O Most Blessed Lord, how well dost Thou repay, not only in the future glory, which is hoped for, but even here below, at once, what is suffered for Thee, and what is done for Thee! How well dost Thou fulfil Thy word, that he who should cleanse his heart will see all that he may desire, which is Thou, Thyself even in this life, according to what Thou hast promised also by Thy prophet, and didst repeat by Thy apostle, that neither eye hath seen nor ear heard, nor hast

[1] *Epist.* 9.

it entered the heart of man what Thou hast prepared for those who seek Thee, obey, love, and desire Thee! What must have been the joy of that saintly soul when it saw itself coming forth with such glory out of so many difficulties and perils, to witness so many clouds disperse at the rising of that sun of splendour which revolves in itself, and the agitated ocean of his thoughts calmed down placidly entering into the happy port of ecstasy and rapture of such extraordinary glory, in company of the inhabitants of Heaven, before whom but a few moments before he had been abashed and ashamed of his very cell! Let him now declare with the apostle that his conversation and dwelling is in the heavens, even so while he still walks upon earth. Oh, if it would please God, and if we would but dispose ourselves so that we might awaken with so sure a succour, and at such a bright example, and, viewing ourselves at so clear a mirror, would but wash ourselves of the stains which disfigure us, and being made clean, we should present ourselves to the divine Majesty, before Him Who does not disdain to clean and wipe away our tears with His own hand, and in so perfect a manner that all grief and sorrow should cease, and pain and sadness be eradicated from the very root!

But we are like the boys (for thus does St. James compare us) who see in the glass the stains that soil their faces yet do not trouble themselves to wash them off, forgetful of what they had seen, for the lives of the saints are nothing else but looking-glasses for us to cleanse our own lives.

BOOK THE THIRD

FOURTH AGE—YOUTH

PROEM

To none of the seven ages of man, if I remember rightly, did the Gentiles—vain and curious in composing fables—give the name of a god or goddess, nor did they consecrate a temple nor dedicate to it an altar or grove, but to the fourth age, called Youth, to which Homer gives the name of Hebe, saying that she was the wife of Hercules, which, in our tongue, means *Flower of the Age.* And in this they were logical and reasonable, because it is from the twenty-second, or, according to the opinion of others, the twenty-fifth year to the fortieth that man is in the flower of his age; all other periods, before or after this number of years, always carry with them some imperfection by reason that he has not reached the completion, or because he declines from that perfect state. Some say that the word *youth* is derived from the Latin *Juvo*, and from it into Jove, and means to assist or succour with joy and contentment, because, when man passes through this period, which is like to the Goddess of the Ages, he is in a state of joy for himself and for others, and it is a time of general contentment; for it is the period when he can assist and give succour, not only to his parents and relatives, but to his city, his country, and friends, more especially if it be a time of war, because this age or period in life is the strongest in man. From this arose the custom that when a lad shaved for the first

time it was a token that he passed into his youth, and this occasion was celebrated among the ancients as a day of rejoicing, and sacrifices were offered to the Goddess of Youth, and the toga, which they called *pretexta*, was changed into the manly toga. And in the sacred Scriptures, whenever the loss of all that is best and finest among the people is bewailed, it is declared under the metaphor of the young men of the city, fallen, dead, or sold, but not wept for, as appears in Isaias, Jeremias, and other prophets, because, when that which is most strong perishes, there remains nothing else of esteem.

They also simulated that the goddess Youth served and gave the nectar to the other gods, and was to be like the cup-bearer of that which, by excellence of beauty, was solely served by Ganimedes to Jupiter, for in their theology all this has its mystery. To youth they consecrated a grove (as Pausanias recounts) in the fields of Corinth, and also built a temple, and the goddess had another temple in the Circus Maximus, as appears by Titus Livius, which enjoyed a pre-eminence above all other temples of Rome, for in this one delinquents could take refuge, as was formerly done in churches, and if, when released from prison, they carried to it their shackles and fetters, and hung them upon its walls, they would remain free. We shall not be overdoing it if we demonstrate how this harmonises with the youth of our saint for having reached this flower of the age; we shall find him doing most heroic things, becoming a succour to the Church, a joy to the faithful, a help to Christianity, the comfort of penitents, and a cup-bearer of heaven, because, by means of the sacred languages which we shall see him commencing to learn (the Hebrew, Chaldean, and Syrian), he will give to drink of the divine nectar of the sacred Scriptures to the other gods, the holy doctors of the Church. He will

manifest the growth of his beard, for it sprung early in life by dint of the severe penances he practised, and on being shaved for the first time will exchange the toga stained by the blows of penance for the toga pure and manly, the Church will have cause to rejoice and feast. He will then be like a privileged temple, where delinquents may resort, and, suspending the fetters of their ignorances, quitting the prison-house of evil deeds and vices, will be made free. Here shall we see him, already wedded to this Hebe (our Jerome like to another Hercules), conquer and tame more monsters with his pen than did that other old man with his club.

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

St. Jerome commences in the Desert the Study of Hebrew.

THE combat did not cease, nor did the enemy of mankind offer a truce to our saint. He tempted him by day and by night, he wearied him with illusions, false appearances, by foul representations, and impure imaginings. The diligence of the saint did not suffice, nor the holy means he adopted, nor the many victories and crowns he gained over the devil deter the enemy from his assaults. Again and again he would return to renew the combat, and essayed by every means to effect an entrance. But God was watching Jerome like to another St. Anthony, and He would fling His soldier at the enemy's face, and cry out to him, "What now do you think of my servant Jerome? Do you imagine there is any one like to him on earth?" At this Satan's rage would kindle up, and renew the temptation by bringing before the saint new visions and representing to him such vivid imaginings, that he would drive him out of his cell, and as he himself has declared, he dared not re-enter it, but would wander through the desert striving to efface these images by change of place. Wishing to make an end to all this, or at least to repress these temptations, or better said, in order that God should work out the life of His saint and of the Church, by the road He desired to pursue, which is

that of drawing great good from the evil actions of the enemy, God inspired into the mind of His servant Jerome the desire which was to fructify and yield great things for the whole of the Church. This thought was, that in order to dispel these violent temptations from his imagination he should occupy himself in the study of the Hebrew language, a thing which in the Church had been attempted but by the few, such as an Origen and an Eusebius, and I know not whether by Epiphanius and Clement.

And as God knows how to dispose all things harmoniously, since He is the Lord of all, He afforded him in the desert on that very occasion a master to that effect, in order that in all things His divine providence should clearly be made manifest.

That the holy doctor commenced this study while yet in the desert, and in order to deliver himself from the warfare which the enemy waged against him, he himself declares, in the Epistle he wrote to Rusticus the monk, in the following words:[1]—"Whilst yet a youth, and despite that I was enclosed and hidden in the most secret part of the desert, I could neither make progress nor withdraw from the war which was made against me by the fire of vices and the heat of my own nature, which in spite of my endeavours to subdue and break by long-continued fasts, yet did not suffice, because my very imagination itself had caught fire. In order to bridle it, it occurred to me to become a pupil of one of the brethren dwelling in the desert, who was himself a Hebrew, and had become converted to the faith. Thus, in order that, after the subtleties of Quintilian, the eloquence of Tully, the depths of Frontonius, and the mellifluousness of Pliny, I might learn the Hebrew alphabet, and should be dwelling on the words which he pronounced with a kind of gnashing of the teeth,

[1] *Epist.* 4, *ad Rust.*

and as it were a gasp. What trouble did it all cost me! And how many difficulties did I encounter, and how often did I despair of success! How often did I put it aside, and how often did I persistently take it up anew! All this is my soul not only a witness, but also the conscience of those who dwelt with me. But I give God thanks, because out of the bitter seeds of those letters I cull sweet fruits."

From all this that our saint has said there seems to arise some things which require to be struck out, and let the first be the last. It is true to say that his intention was to learn the holy language, in order that by such a saintly occupation he might deliver himself from the importunate thoughts which the devil sought to put in his mind; for this motive does he discover in these words, because it was to this purpose that Rusticus counselled him, in order to manifest to him how many were the evils idleness causes in the soul; nevertheless, despite all this, he had undoubtedly very high aims in undertaking the study so earnestly. Among these, the first and the chief one was that which God put in his heart, viz. to work in His Church so sovereign a favour as to give her a doctor consummately learned, and so sound in principle that he should not only teach holy dogmas and doctrine like the other doctors, but that he should open the original fountain whence they had sprung, and draw down drink from that source alone without seeking any streams, that is to say, translating from the original Hebrew and Greek the Old and the New Testament, thus collecting the waters without passing through any channels. Such other translations as existed at the time in Latin of the sacred scriptures, as far as regards the Old Testament, were not taken from the Hebrew and done into Latin, but from Hebrew into Greek, and then from the Greek into Latin,

and if any such existed it was not the true and legitimate work of a son of the Church. And whereas this question of the translations is one of such gravity, and must be taken leisurely farther on, for it forms a very principal point in the history of our saint, I will say no more respecting the motive and end, but will confirm the fact with his own words, found in the twelfth chapter on Jeremias addressed to his disciple Eusebius Cremonensis, and which are as follows:—"The devil has no common patience that I should enjoy the quietude I so desired; and that I should occupy myself with the declaration of the divine letters, and that to men who speak my own tongue (that is the Latin), I should afford them information of the depth and erudition of the Greek and Hebrew letters, but by day and by night, in secret and in public, does Satan persecute me."[1] The same thing does he affirm in the Preface to his *Commentaries on Daniel.* And when writing to Sunia and to Fratella he says as follows:—"In the same way as when among the Latins there arises any differences in the books of the New Testament, that we resort to the fountain of the Greek language, in which the New Testament was originally written, for elucidation, so also if any difference occurs among the Greeks or Latins in respect to the Old Testament, recourse is had to the Hebrew text and truth, thus seeking to understand them from the streams that come forth from the fountain itself."

This sentence of our doctor is placed in the Decree,[2] to which also St. Augustine alludes in his books of the Christian doctrine, where he says: "The men of the Latin race, for whom we write this, have need of both the other languages, Greek and Hebrew, for the knowledge of the divine scriptures; because, if there should arise any difficulty from the various translations of the Latin

[1] Proem, lib. iii. *De Hier.* tom. iv.

[2] Dist. 9, cap. *Ad Veteres.*

interpreters, let them have recourse to the first texts in which they were written."[1]

It also appeared to St. Jerome that the Hebrew language was the mother, and as it were the origin, of all the other languages. He desired to know them all from their origin, and attain to the root of the first, learning it with great diligence. That this was also a motive for pursuing the study he declares on expounding the third chapter of Sophonias,[2] where he says: "The word *Nugas* I knowingly left as it was, because it is the same in the Hebrew. From this we can understand how the Latin tongue is enclosed in the Hebrew, and that the Hebrew is the mother of all the languages, but I now cannot declare it." When writing to Pope Damasus the interpretation of the vision of Isaias, among other things he says: "That the Hebrew is the beginning of all languages, and of the Latin tongue which we speak, in which said Hebrew the Old Testament is written, is taught by all antiquity. Because after the sin and offence offered to God in the building of the proud Tower of Babel was effected, confusion of tongues took place in all nations, and these differences of speech were spread throughout the world."[3]

How much truth there is in this which our doctor teaches, that the first language of the world had been the Hebrew, and that it is the mother of all languages is confirmed by common opinion. Moreover, many of the Hebrews affirm, and the doctor himself confirms it, that Hebrew eventually will be the last language, and the only one in the world, as appears in his *Commentaries on the Second Chapter of Sophonias*; and whereas the digression would be too lengthy were we to attempt to prove this from his standpoint, we shall leave the question for another

[1] August. 3, *De Doctrina Christiana.*

[2] *Com. in Sophon.* cap. 3. 1, 8.

[3] *Epist.* 142, *auto medium.*

occasion. And when, farther on, we shall treat of the translation which the holy doctor made of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Latin, and the New Testament from the Greek into Latin, we shall manifest whether the Vulgate translation which the Church uses be the one which St. Jerome made in the whole or in part. Likewise, we shall also treat of the integrity and purity of the Hebrew text, in which the sacred scripture was dictated by the Holy Ghost. At present we solely consider the motive which the saint had in undertaking the study of Hebrew at the cost of so much trouble. And the second will be to consider from his own words the difficulty which he himself dwells upon when he places his conscience as his witness, and that of others, affirming that oftentimes would he give it up as though in despair, and at other times would renew the study with the determination of conquering its difficulty, or because it pleased God he should not lay it aside.

In two things it strikes me the difficulty consisted in those days; because at the present day it is comparatively an easy thing, and an affair of few days' work: the first was the absence of vowels in writing this language as is used in others, because in Hebrew there were never any, but only consonants, which is the firm and substantial part of diction, leaving the vowels to the good intelligence, the fulness and perfection of the educated lip and accustomed to the language. And whereas this is such an extraordinary thing, and so new in all languages, and in those times there were no arts or grammars, and all depended on the use and custom, it became a most difficult thing to overcome, because it depended on a good memory, exercise and a carefulness well-nigh continual. Some Jews affirm, who have been converted to the faith from the synagogues of Africa, in our own times, and with

whom I have conversed upon this point, that as they have not the arts and the grammars which we have, nor indeed are these permitted them, it takes many years for them to learn the language, and indeed after great labour few ever attain to a perfect knowledge. Hence, if to this be added not having vowels, or stops, as was the case in the time of our saint, it would be almost impossible to acquire it. Yet all these difficulties did he conquer, persevering and labouring, assisted by his genius and wonderful memory, which he in truth possessed to an extreme degree. That arts and rules were wanting, and that there were no points in place of the vowels in this language in the time of our doctor, is most clear. It would suffice as a proof to find that although many occasions offered themselves in which it appears almost imperative that he should mention it, yet he does not do so, nor any one else of those of his time who were acquainted with the language.

There are not wanting authors[1] of repute who affirm that the stops which we see now beneath, or above, or in the middle of letters which are consonants, and that are there in place of vowels, are as ancient as the Scripture itself, indeed have existed since the time when God taught it to Moses, or at least from the time of Isaias and his disciples, especially of those two who succeeded him, called, the one Ben Neptalim and the other Ben Asser, who were great scribes in the law. But both the one and the other are mistaken, and it is ignorance of history, and little erudition and learning. The Jews themselves, by common agreement, affirm in their histories that in the year 436, after Vespasian and Titus his son had destroyed the city and the temple of Jerusalem, that it was in the 78th year after the birth of Christ our Lord, in the pontificate

[1] Ceballerius *apud* Genebrad. in proem. Salm. Galatin. lib. 1, cap. 8; Lilium Gregor. *Gerald. de poetarum hist.* dial. 1. Genebra. *Cron.*, lib. 3, p. 251.

of Pope Simplicius, forty-nine years after St. Peter, and in the seventh year of the Empire of Zenon, there was gathered together a council of the chiefs of the Jews, who had escaped that famous ravage wrought on them in the city of Tiberias in Palestine, to which council also assisted such as were able from Babylon, and that in this council it was ordained that, forasmuch as they were daily suffering new trials, and found themselves surrounded by great misfortunes, carried to various towns in captivity, and even scattered about, thereby losing communications with each other, it was imperative that thereby they would lose good pronunciation, accent, and the legitimate punctuation of the sacred writings, which they had learned from their forefathers and masters, Esdras, Gamaliel, Joshua, Eleazar, and many others; it would be expedient and necessary for them to set all this down, marking out these points in all the future books they should write. It was then and there that the stops and accents were invented which we now see in the Hebrew Bibles without touching the letters, as we shall state farther on. The chief of these masters, it is said, were Rabbi Aaron, Ben-Asser, Rabbi Jacob, and Ben-Neptalim; and it is added, that when between the two they did not agree as to the vowel or the accent, they put the one version of the lesson in the body and context, and the other version on the outside, and some would follow the one and others the second one. Thus are we told by R. David Kimi on the 60th Psalm, and in this way do the various lessons appear at the present time in all Hebrew Bibles, with great accordance, although these are not by far so many as appear in the Vulgate translation. This is the history which is very well known to all. At this period our doctor most undoubtedly had been dead more than thirty years, and thus was

unable to avail himself of this punctuation and other advantages.

From all that has been said in passing, we are warned not to contemn the various translations of the scriptures, and still less the study of the holy language, for the saintly doctor concludes, with forcible reasoning, that the pregnant words, full and ambiguous of a language, more particularly of Hebrew, cannot be explained by a single word in another tongue, and that it is well-nigh impossible to translate them into another language conveying the same depth and fulness of signification of the original, and must ever be short of the wide and full sense conveyed in Hebrew. And whereas the Holy Ghost chose the Hebrew language in order to declare great secrets in one word, there is not formed any one single word, as though by chance and without a heavenly concord; and when it is translated, one translation expresses one meaning, and another translation interprets another meaning, yet all are good and of great profit, yet withal, much still remains hidden. We would have small difficulty to understand this to be as certain as though it were of faith, if we consider the words which the Holy Ghost speaks through Jesus, son of Sirach, in the Prologue of *Ecclesiasticus*, when, enhancing the difficulty of translating Hebrew even into Greek, a language so rich and copious as it is, he concludes with this actual sentence: "The words taken from the Hebrew remain, as it were, clipped when we change them into another tongue."[1] An infinite number of examples might we give to illustrate this sentence of our doctor, or better said, of the Holy Ghost. I will, however, furnish one or two in order that all may understand.

[1] "Nam deficiunt verba hebraica quando fuerint translata ad alteram linguam in prol. Ecclesiast."

When, in the book of Exodus, God spoke to Moses on the manner of sacrifice, and directed how the lamb should be eaten on the eve of the day when he was to set them free, He said, among other rites, that it should be eaten in haste: *Et comedetis festinanter.* To this word corresponds one in Hebrew which sounds not only *in haste*, but also expresses astonishment, terror, reverence, admiration. And in all these meanings is this word found interpreted in other places of the sacred Scriptures; for instance, as when in the Psalm it says: *At the voice of Thy thunder they shall fear*,[1] where in place of the Latin *formidabunt* there stands the actual word in Hebrew of *chipazon*, and when again in the Psalm is said, *Ego dixi in excessu meo omnis homo mendax.* In my excess and contemplation I said, "Every man is a liar," there occurs the same word to signify excess and admiration. It stands clearly from this, that the Holy Ghost placed that word so pregnant in a place of great mystery, in order to signify in one word the haste we must make to quit the captivity of sin; and because this must be done by means of the passion and the sacrifice of the Lamb Jesus Christ, it must be effected with much reverence, trembling, and awe. And he who considers how deeply the Lord loves us, that He gave freely His own Son to redeem the slave, must needs come forth out of himself in an ecstasy, raised above his senses, and a hundred other marvellous things which are herein enclosed, and which cannot be understood by only one version which is given, viz. "Thou shalt eat in haste," nor by a second one which says "with reverence."

These are words of St. Jerome wherein he expresses how greatly the Hebrew alphabet with its deep signification of the letters afforded him matter for contemplation; and he even goes so far as to say that he pondered upon

[1] Ps. ciii. 7.

them day and night, and thus was fulfilled in him what David sings of the good tree, which will bring forth its fruit in due season. Thus will be seen the majesty of this language, in which tongue God revealed His heart and His secrets to men, and which its mere alphabet thus could so sweetly entertain so grave a doctor as Jerome, that he himself says he could not compare their signification to any earthly delight.

It was with this study and consequent contemplation of its holiness and pregnancy that Jerome closed the door upon his importunate imaginings, and opened it wide in order to behold such great treasures as this study revealed to him. It was by this way that he overcame the enemy. By these means does he keep his passions in subjection, because idleness is a very large gate for the enemy to enter in who never loses sight of an occasion or means. And to Rusticus, monk, he writes thus: "He who in truth considers the divine letters, and loves the science of the Scriptures, will certainly not love the vices of the flesh; and he whom the devil always finds engaged in some occupation, has small chance of fixing him with vain desires and evil intentions. This was the first undertaking our saint engaged in during his youthful days. May it please God to plant similar desires in our own hearts; because a youth who is occupied in evil things can only by a miracle avoid falling miserably."

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

St. Jerome suffers many Temptations in the Desert. He is punished by God in an extraordinary Vision.

Although the enemy of the saints finds himself so vanquished, yet does he not, in spite of this, mitigate his rage; the rather he tries other methods. At times he rests, not because he is tired, but for crafty reasons, in order that with relief neglect may arise and watchfulness be relaxed. He leaves aside more powerful means, because he finds that then he encounters greater resistance; and thus he seeks others which at first sight appear weak and of small account, but not for those who are aware of his methods. Satan could no longer bear with patience the good principles of Jerome; it seemed to him that a greater war was waged thereby than he had judged at first he had to fear, and, knowing the foundations, he inferred conclusively that the damage would not be less that he could expect than what he had experienced with Paul, Anthony, Macarius, Hilary, and Arsenius. He judges, with good reason, that those injuries were done, as it were, in passing, and a draught drank which was soon over. Here he does not see, however, that this one is so easily moved; rather it seems to him that an invincible enemy has risen before him who in life and in death he will find very hard to overcome. In the first encounter with the temptations of

the flesh he acknowledges himself vanquished, and were he to experience the same results in regard to his fasts, his watchings, his great penances, the wearing of chains, hair shirts, the sleeping on the bare ground, the blows on his breast, his tears, prayers, sighs, he would carry him along by the common way. But to see himself conquered by a youth who stamps out thoroughly the fury of his flames with letters, and sacred letters too, this was a bad prognostic, for this was a novel kind of victory, and consequently a mortal fall. Then he proceeds to enkindle his genius, and seeks a new style of warfare, and thus against letters he places letters, and against those that are sacred he pits profane ones. Let us investigate the scheme of the devil, and we shall see behind it the hand of God.

St. Jerome had with him in the desert the friends we have already mentioned — Heliodorus, Innocentius, and Hylas. With these he rested awhile, and sought alleviation from the strictness of the penitential life he led by conversing and communing with them, and giving an account of the affairs of his soul, he to them as a father, and they to him as his sons. It seems to me that Satan must have asked God's permission to tempt the saint in so sensitive a part by removing all his companions, some by absence, others by death.

The saint tenderly loved his friends, which is an attribute of the saints, because some have been very badly hurt on this point. Satan commenced with the first of those three above-mentioned, Heliodorus. In order to induce him to leave the desert he placed before him in a very vivid manner the widowhood of an only sister who was very dear to him, and of a baby nephew called Nepotianus, whom he tenderly loved. Thus, under pretext of protecting them, he resolved to quit the desert, without taking heed of the tears of his friend or the burn-

ing reasons which he urged in order to detain him. At length he went. May God deliver us from such a temptation taking hold of our hearts! How many such has the devil drawn out under this false pretext from monasteries, and how few have ever been delivered from his clutches, although Heliodorus happily was one of those released. In order to alleviate his sadness, since the bow cannot always be on the stretch, nor could he be ever perusing such deep things as are the sacred writings, our saint would take up Plato, and with his witticisms and clever points the devil endeavoured to besmear in such a manner the soul, that what was not in appearance so sweet (as the sacred letters are not in outward dress) he would begin to cast to his face.

At this period he wrote to the absent and fugitive friend a letter, which, albeit very holy, carries its sanctity, as it were, clothed in this flowery style, and the saint himself confesses it in the *Epistle to Nepocene*,[1] saying that he had employed in it many figures of speech and rhetorical colourings. The object of the Epistle was to persuade him to return to the desert, and this he does with such erudition and wit, so full of loving phrases, such vivacity of reasoning, that I believe it has since proved powerful in the hearts of many servants of God to induce them to leave their homes and cities and proceed to the remotest deserts. Thus, although the enemy persuaded Heliodorus to leave Jerome, yet this letter gained over to Christ many others. No one who peruses it, however tepid he may be, but is fired and has fresh fuel put into him of desires for leading a better life. In Heliodorus, although no such great effect was worked as was expected (because he continued with his sister and nephew), yet it served in my opinion as a perpetual mirror of his life, for he lived in the

[1] *Epist.* 1.

city as in a desert, preserving the practices of the monk so closely that through them he merited that his fellow-citizens should choose him for their Prelate. The enemy continued carrying on his scheme after having gained but little by his first engagement, God ordaining all to the advantage of His servants and of His Church. Innocentius was stricken down by so severe an illness and acute fever that in a few days he lost his life, God taking away his soul to reward him for his pious and saintly labours. This death greatly wounded the heart of Jerome, because he used to call him a *part of his soul*, and such are the true friends when friendship has no other object but the love of God. The consolation which Jerome found during these trials was constant prayer, the common holy exercises, turning to Christ, casting himself at the feet of the Saviour, and in return the enemy would enter in silently to console him by placing in his hands some book of the Gentiles, in order that he should take delight in the elegance of diction, and sweetly drink in the deceit of his malice, and thus lose the taste for what sounded to the ear less eloquent.

One other companion was yet left to him called Hylas; but this one died not long after from some illness or other, and again the wound was opened afresh ere it had been well healed. All this does he himself declare in an Epistle to Rufinus[1] in these words: "Innocentius, who was part of my soul, was taken from me by a sudden access of malignant fever. I have only a portion of light with Evagrius who, by reason of my own continued ill-health, is kept well occupied. In my company I had Hylas, a servant of the holy man Melanius, who, by the purity of his habits and life, filled the low condition of servant, and with his death the wound became renewed which had not been as yet closed. Such was the roughness of that place,

[1] *Epist.* 41.

such were its many discomforts, the extremes of cold and heat so trying, the compensations so few, that naught could be expected but sickness and death." Yet the saint persevered alone and full of courage, and not satisfied still, the enemy presses him with serious and grave illnesses in order that at least thereby he should be forced to remit the rigours of penance and put aside his holy studies. He himself affirms that there was no class of illness which he did not experience in that desert, a thing that amazes me, since it is clearly seen that all this was done by divine permission, and due to the fury of Satan.

It is a subject of deep astonishment thus to see a youth who had been brought up tenderly and surrounded by wealth, set in a desert so rough, so full of discomforts, and, moreover, always surrounded and assailed by some form or other of pain, fever, distress of mind and sadness, and that he should remain so greatly a master of himself, so persevering, so determined to end there his life, so fearless of death, and always so cheerful that he actually invites others to come and enjoy those delights and advantages which, to his mind, were unequalled on earth. Some depart from him, others are taken by death, he himself stretched on the bare ground full of aches and pains, nevertheless all these are his glory; he faints not, nor does he desist, nor does he surrender. Great favour was needed to bear such dire trials! God succours him with a great increase of grace; in secret does He solace him, because otherwise his life would be impossible to bear. Twice in the Epistle I have just quoted does he dwell on the multiplicity of his pains, and in particular when, writing to the holy virgin Eustochium, he recounts some illness he had at the middle of Lent; and whereas by it is revealed the whole detail of what we have said, as well as in order to narrate the great favour which God employed

towards him in delivering him from a form of temptation so secret and dangerous. It is imperative to recount it in his own words. He is exhorting the virgin Eustochium not to read books that are profane or worldly, on account of the great havoc they cause, without being perceived, in the soul, and proceeds, saying: "What connection hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial?[1] What hath Horace to do with the Psalter? the Gospel with Virgil? Tully with the Apostles? The brethren would be scandalised to see you eat of what is sacrificed to the idols,[2] and despite that to the pure all things may be pure,[3] and nought should be despised that is taken with thanksgiving, nevertheless it is not right that we should at the same time drink the chalice of Christ together with that of the devils. I wish to give you an account of the history of my misfortune and my misery. I had now for many years determined upon depriving myself, for the kingdom of Heaven, of my home, my parents, brothers, and relatives, and what is more difficult, the long-accustomed luxury of great and costly viands, on departing for Jerusalem to dwell there, but I could not part from my library which I had collected together with such care and expense in Rome, in such a manner that I, poor me, fasted so that I might be able to read Tully, and after the long vigils of the night, where I had shed abundant tears which the memory of my sins had brought to my eyes from the very depths of my heart, I would begin to read Plautus, and if perchance seeing my peril, I, full of repentance, would read one of the prophets, the crude style would seem to mock me, and, as in the case of blind-folded eyes, I could not see the light, I judged the fault to lie in the sun and not in the blindness."[4]

[1] 1 Cor. x. 30.
[2] 1 Cor. viii. 10.
[3] T. t. 1.
[4] *Epist.* 22.

Up to this point the saint has confessed his temptation and the victory by which he would overcome the enemy —a humility proper only of a true saint. He adds, then, the narrative of the extraordinary course by which God delivered him and the great fruit he derived from it, and says: "And whilst in this manner the old, crafty serpent was thus mocking me, at mid-Lent I was assailed with such a burning fever in my bones and marrow, that it took possession violently of my body, already weakened and exhausted, that without giving me a moment of rest or relief, it was consuming my members to an incredible degree. To such an extreme depth of weakness was I reduced that my bones could scarcely hold together. And meanwhile that the necessary preparations were being carried out for my approaching burial, and at the very moment when the vital heat of the soul had withdrawn from all the parts of my body which had already grown cold, and could only be felt in a slight degree in the heart, I was suddenly ravished in spirit and taken before the tribunal of the Judge, where the brightness was such and the resplendency which emanated from all those who were present was so brilliant, that, casting myself down to the ground, I never once dared to raise my eyes. I was questioned as to my condition and state. I freely replied that I was a Christian. 'You lie,' replied He Who presided at that audience. 'You are not a Christian but a Ciceronian, for where your treasure is there is your heart.' I was dumbfounded at the moment, and between the lashes (for I was being lashed by order of the Judge) I was more fiercely tormented by the fire of my conscience, and in my heart I considered that versicle, '*Lord, who shall confess to Thee in hell, or praise Thee?*' I began to call out and to say imploringly, my eyes streaming with tears: 'Lord, take pity on me, have mercy on me!' Only

this cry was heard above the noise of the scourging. At length those that were present fell down on their knees before the Judge, beseeching Him with great instance to pardon my fault, alleging that I was but a youth, and to give me time to amend the error by penance, and that if after this experience I should again take to reading the books of the Gentiles, then to punish me with greater torments. I, who found myself in such straits, very willingly would have promised even greater things; and so I commenced to vow a thousand times and to protest and take His holy Name as witness, saying: 'Lord, should I from henceforth ever hold before me the books of the Gentiles, were I ever again to read them or look at them, say that I have denied Thee!' And at the very instant that I took this oath and made the protestation I was released. I returned to myself and opened my eyes. All those around me were amazed, and so bathed in tears was I from the pain endured, that to any incredulous man whatsoever, they would have been a sufficient testimony of my trance. That was not, indeed, a transport or vain dream of those which at times occur to us and leave us mocked. A testimony of the truth of this was that tribunal before which I had lain prostrate, and a further true testimony, that judgment which inspired me with so much fear. Never may it please God that I should find myself in such dire straits again. I confess I came out with my shoulders well wounded, and I felt the effects of the scourging I had had inflicted on me after regaining consciousness, and, furthermore, from that moment I read the divine words with such diligence and attention as I never before had read human letters."

In respect to this admirable vision—our saintly doctor, who in this instance denies it to have been an ordinary dream—many have been the malicious who impudently

have ascribed to it strange things. And in order that once and for all we may declare and reply to them, I wish to make here a minute answer to all. The first to treat of this was Rufinus, who, on perceiving that our holy doctor interweaved and quoted verses and sentences of the Gentiles with his speech, dared to calumniate him as a man who had perjured himself, pointing to him as one who did not keep the oath taken, and the promise made, to God and before His saints. He styles him sacrilegious and perfidious, as may be seen in the places we shall further on state,[1] and in such a way does Rufinus take the question up, that he imputes to the saint the crime of sacrilege. To an opposite extreme do others incline who hold this as so palpable a dream, that they laugh at it as though it were no more than a thing that is dreamed, and scoff at those who take any notice of it. This declaration was found in the Commentary on this epistle, written by an author who, on other occasions, was in the habit of speaking with small reserve and very much malice.[2] I would willingly set here his words in order to make known the motives, but they have been erased by legitimate censure, hence there is no need to bring his daring words to memory. Others again[3] do not only scoff at the dream, but also at the cause of it; they say that without reason was he scourged for being Ciceronian, because neither his style or language had anything of Cicero. Others there are who follow another extreme, and have been so alarmed at these scourgings, that they held it to be nothing less than sacrilege to read in Cicero —or indeed in any other author—of those which have remained to us of antiquity, as though Jerome had sworn on behalf also of them; and these, on witnessing that a

[1] Lib. 1, *Apol. in Rufi.* c. 7. [2] Eras. in Sco., *Epist.* 22.
[3] Angelus Politianus.

book is of great erudition and good diction, flee from it lest it should take them to judgment. Hence it appears that some make out the saint to be a perjurer because he broke his oath; others that he was a liar or scoffer, who sells his dream as though it were true; others again a barbarian, who knows little of Tully; while others would wish to remain in ignorance, and not imitate him lest they also should come in for a part of his scourgings. Such is the variety and the vanity of the various spirits, since in a case so clear and holy they found as many errors as can well be imagined.

If in the saints feelings were admissible, I doubt not St. Jerome would feel all this discussion far more than he did the scourgings. There was yet wanting to him this temptation: since the devil could not make war on him with it in life, he at least manifests to him his enmity when dead.

To all these objections let us come forth to meet them with solely one quotation of the saint himself, for, if it be properly understood, they will all be overcome. Replying to the crime imputed to him by Rufinus of not having kept what in dreams he had promised, and even vowed to do, he says to him as follows: "Oh, I am made a perjurer with a mixture of sacrilege, because in the book in which I taught the virgin of Christ how to guard virginity, I promised, while asleep, before the tribunal of the Judge, not to study again secular letters, and that subsequently here at times I remembered and repeat what I there condemned. Without doubt this is the Califurnius of which Sallust makes mention; he who, by means of the great orator of Rome, sent me a question of small account, to which I replied by a short letter. But now let us come to the matter we have in hand, and let us reply to the objection of the sacrilege and perjury. I declared that

from henceforth I would not again read secular books. This promise was for the future, and I did not bind myself by it to forget the past. You will at once rejoin and demand, 'How is it that I can remember what for such a length of time I had not read?' Were I to reply to this with something of the said secular books, and should say: 'This is the effect of what one is accustomed to in early years, and with this I contradict you and incur the crime of perjury, and with the self-same weapons which I should bring forward for my defence, I would be refuted against what I defend. The remedy is for us to make a long discourse of all, and then the people will admit it to be a fact. Which of us is there who does not recall his childhood?" Then in a skilful and graceful manner he proceeds replying to the impertinences and childishness of Rufinus, but which, however, is too long a narrative to quote, and, moreover, unnecessary. One thing is certain, that St. Jerome never called this occurrence a dream; rather he denied it being so in a forcible manner, and calls God to witness that it was not so, as he states in the *Epistle to Eustochium*, "A fine manner of sleep this, to feel the scourging of the lashes after awaking. May I never find myself again in such dire distress. Rufinus, who calls it a dream, is ignorant when accusing me of sacrilege, for my not fulfilling what he says I vowed to do when dreaming." Otherwise let us ask our saint why it was he so faithfully and carefully abstained from reading these secular books, but because he never held it to have been a dream, ever present to him the gravity of the case, for he pondered over it in his soul, acknowledging the great favour of God who had delivered him in so singular a manner from so grave and dangerous a temptation, both as to the vain delight which he felt in the perusal of those books and in the amount of time he spent over them.

And what is more serious still, because by their perusal he was losing the taste for the sacred Scriptures, towards which God was carrying him with the highest aims to the great advantage of His Church.

It only remains to be stated as the ending of this discourse (to such as are devout to our saint) what were those scourgings, what dream, what rapture was that here described, for it is well to know this because it was so extraordinary a thing. In the first place, the saint says that he was suddenly ravished in spirit, from which it is manifest that it was not due to melancholy induced by the illness, which being earthly and human possesses the properties of earth and compresses the soul in the interior. For many persons when in this state believe that they see visions, and that they have revelations, when in truth they neither see the one nor hear the other, but which are due purely to the form of sickness which inwardly fiercely agitates and induces fantasies. Nor was it a dream (since this does not occur in bodies so exhausted and wasted as his, nor in so sudden a manner), but it was a rapture sent by God, by the divine virtue of which the soul is raised without having the power to resist, nor able to help itself; and for this reason is it called rapture, violent ravishment, as in the excess or ecstasy that springs from the vehement propension to the thing loved. The soul, I say, rises up above all its natural conditions, by divine virtue, to know and see something supernatural without in the work, the understanding taking advantage of any sensitive power, it rather remains very abstracted and soaring above it all, so that by its lowliness to impede so lofty an operation. Hence, there remained in the saint the spirit united to the body as in its proper form, yet withdrawn from the senses; and there he saw that Majesty, throne, light, and Judge by spiritual representation. The scourging, although

painful, he did not feel with the body and sense of feeling which there worked nothing, but with the actual apprehension of the soul; because although, after coming to himself, he felt the wounds, as they were not caused by a material instrument, but by the spiritual and most efficacious ministry of the angels, were not perceived by the persons present, nor did the body itself feel the punishment until the time when the soul, on returning to the use of the senses, these all performed their office, and the part hurt was relieved by the blood, and the weals began to show, and the wounds were made manifest, then resulted the pain, and the tears burst forth. Marvels such as these does God perform on behalf of His saints, and oftentimes does He raise them and ravish them in this manner, either to show them great things, or for their correction, or for our example. Well might Jerome from this moment acknowledge and claim to himself that he was very much a child of God, and of the number of the more greatly favoured, because if the Holy Ghost Himself declares that He chastises all those He receives as His sons, and we clearly see that He does not lead Jerome along the path of ordinary chastisements, but that He Himself in person comes to correct him, it is a sign and prognostic that He is fitting him for great things. Many of these marvels are here being revealed to us, and a grand field might be shown did the course of this history permit it, but what we have said on this point suffices.

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

Satan persecutes St. Jerome in the Desert by means of Heretics until he forces him to quit it.

Satan found himself vanquished in all the encounters he had had with this holy monk, and that the weapons he employed were of no use, for the saint unravelled all his wiles and countermined all his engines of war. To the evil thoughts and fantasies suggested by him, Jerome replied by fasts, vigils, and prayers; to excessive ardours by striking his breast, by sleeping on the bare ground, by groans and sighs. If he deprives him of his friends he only adheres more firmly to God; if he inflicts upon him grave illnesses and maladies, he doubles his crown by exercising patience; and that when deprived of the solace of reading the elegant Books of the Gentiles, he could not even then enter into him, because all his readings were centred in the Scriptures and in spiritual thoughts.

Satan burns with rage and is torn with envy; he fears far more the future result than the present loss; it seemed to him that in all this Jerome stands the victor, that he will plant a greater school than Anthony did in other times; in his mind's eye he already saw him famous everywhere, and the fame of this youth carried swiftly through the globe, of this youth who, born of noble parents, yet leaves the West and Rome and even his own

country, learned in the Latin and Greek tongues, and now even well advanced in the principles of Hebrew. Already an erudite philosopher and in the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures learned beyond all the known learned in those parts of the East, a youth of great hopes, and above all else famous for the sanctity of his life.

The astute enemy then takes occasion to make renewed war. He schemes how to take him out of the desert, to deprive him of that solitude and dwelling-place and induce him to return to the cities of the world, where even when occasions offer, the most experienced become lost. In order to succeed in his schemes he entered the hearts of those who still remained at that time of the heresy of Arius, which were a goodly number, more particularly in Antioch, throughout the Province of Cilicia, in the city of Tarsus, and in that part called Campas, whence the heretics derive the name of Campenses and Tarsenses. These followed the sect condemned in the first General Council of Nicæa. These heretics had all perceived that in the desert a young man of the Latin church was dwelling, with whom no one in the Greek church could be compared for sanctity and letters. It seemed to them that it would be of the greatest importance for the present time, and for the future, to have him on their side and make him one of their faction. Not only did Satan endeavour to do this as regards the Campenses and the Tarsenses, but likewise with the Prelates of Antioch, so that from both parts war should be made on him, thus endeavouring to conclude with men's hands what he could not do by his own.

At that time the Patriarchal Church of Antioch was divided with pestilential schisms, having (as Nicephorus Callistus refers, and is proved by our doctor) conjointly three patriarchs, the first being Paulinus, the second

Meletius, and the third Vitalis, each of these wanting Jerome for himself, feeling confident of easy victory against the two other parties should he enlist such aid on his part, for such was the authority and the name he carried. All these parties were in great haste; the Prelates, so that Jerome should declare which would he decide to attach himself to and obey; the heretics on their side urged him to declare himself an Arian. The latter were well aware it would be impossible to accomplish this suddenly and openly. They approached him by degrees, desiring him to acknowledge in God three *hypostases*. Although our holy youth well understood that in confessing this there was no difficulty nor danger in reality and in the thing, because among learned men *hypostases* in Greek means the same as in Latin, and in common parlance *persona*, yet he would not do so, in order not to concert with them even their mode of speaking. That it be the same in Greek *hypostases* as *persona* in Latin the holy fathers of the Greek Church themselves declare. St. Basil wrote an Epistle to his brother Gregory of Nyssa on this, and tells him that *ousia* is what the Latins call *nature* and *essence* or *substance*; and what the Greeks express by *hypostasis* is for the Latins the same as *suppositus* or *persona*. St. Athanasius teaches the same, and St. Gregory Nazianzen refers that he was the one who taught the Greeks that what to the Latins is *persona* is *hypostasis* to them, and *vice versa*, so that neither the one nor the other should have any suspicion of the terms. All this the saint knew very well, and thus did he understand it and declared when he was questioned. Nevertheless, he would not employ the same diction as the heretics, nor their manner of speaking, because as the same Gregory of Nazianzen refers, at that period it had become very odious to the Latins the term *hypostasis*, and with greater reason

was it odious to St. Jerome, since these heretics set great diligence in that they should confess three *hypostases*. From all this haste and the importunate charge they laid against him, the saint was inspired to take refuge in the safe stronghold of the faith, which is the Roman Church, and refer to her Pontiff, who at the time was Damasus, a native of Spain, and despite that they had but small intercourse with one another, yet Jerome was inspired to write to him. The chief points touched upon were to ask him instructions whether he should consent, and confer, with the heretics declaring three *hypostases*; and the second as to which of the three Prelates of Antioch he was to join and give his obedience.

He wrote two letters upon this question, both worthy of being read, and both very necessary in those times. I will transcribe here the most important parts of them. In the first he says as follows: "Whereas on account of the ancient fury the cities of the East are broken up and unhealthy, and the tunic of the Lord without a seam and undivided is now divided into parts; the foxes are destroying the vineyards of Christ to such an extent that the broken cisterns cannot retain the water, and with great difficulty can it be discovered where that sealed fountain and the enclosed garden are, I have resolved to take refuge as in a true haven in the chair of Peter, and in that faith so praised by the apostolic mouth, because in her I found, and do find, the food of the soul, where once before I had received the tunic and vesture of Christ. And I shall not be deterred from seeking this precious pearl by reason of the wide sea which stands between, nor by the far-distant lands, for where the body is there will the eagles be gathered together, and spent out and well nigh consumed by the evil generation is the patrimony, and it is close to you that is kept pure and in its integrity

the inheritance of the elders. There, indeed, is the fertile land which responds by the hundredfold to the pure seed sown by the Lord, because here the grain of good seed which is received in the byways, being bad ground, has degenerated into wild oats; now it springs up, and as the Sun of Justice rises up in the west and in the east, so also like to Lucifer falls he whose pretension was to set his chair above the stars of heaven. You are the light of the world, you are the salt of the earth, you are the vessels of silver and gold. Here the vessels of wood and of clay are being consumed and broken by the rod of iron and burned by the eternal fire. Despite that your grandeur terrifies and appals me, yet, on the other hand, your humanity encourages me. As to a priest I ask the sacrifice of salvation, and as being a sheep I appeal for succour to the shepherd; let all envy depart, and away with all fulsomeness of ambition and Roman pomp, for with the successor of the fisherman and with a disciple of the Cross do I speak. I, who do not follow any one before Christ, am attached and closely knit to your beatitude, which is to say, the Chair of Peter; upon that stone I know the Church is founded, and any one who outside of this house should eat of the Lamb is a profaner. Should any one not be inside the ark of Noah, meanwhile that the waters of the deluge are flooding the earth, let him consider himself as one lost."

Many things of importance has St. Jerome declared in these brief words worthy of being pondered over, but history does not permit us the time to do so. Then he continues to propose his doubt to Damasus, and adds that he does not wish to serve under Vitalis or Meletius or Paulinus, because it appears to him that they are neither subject to, nor united to, the Roman pontiff. He also makes known to him that they are urging him with great insistence to confess the three *hypostases*, and at the end of

the letter he says: "Well does the word *hypostasis* declare three subsistent persons, and when I say that I also understand it so, they judge me to be a heretic. Why do they weary themselves so much about a word? What is it that they keep hidden beneath this ambiguous term? If they thus believe it, as they declare they do, I do not condemn what they feel on the subject; if I believe it to be so, as they dissimulate or pretend they believe, let them permit me to declare what they say they feel, in my own words. Therefore I humbly beseech your Beatitude for the Saviour of the world crucified, and for the essence of the Holy Trinity, that you write to me an epistle and give me the permission whether to keep silence or to speak, in regard to the question of the three *hypostases*. And whereas the seclusion of this remote place in which I live might perchance be mistaken, address the messenger to Evagrius the presbyter, who is well known to you, with the replies. And at the same time do you declare to me your will as to which of the three prelates of Antioch I am to communicate with, because the Campenses heretics, together with those of Tarsus, have no deeper scheme than with your authority, and with the confidence that they are in union with you, to preach the three hypostases in the ancient sense."

St. Jerome here styles the ancient sense not that which was given in the Nicene Council, but that of the Arians. That expression which the holy doctor employs of *communicating* is an ancient ceremony, used in those times in the Church. When there were partialities and divisions, those who followed one class and confessed one same thing, after having received the holy Eucharist, had some sign or countersign[1] by which they were known and com-

[1] *Tessera*=sign or countersign; a cubical piece of wood or bone used by the Romans.

municated. Thus does Innocent I. declare it, and he states that it was usual in Rome to send a small quantity of unleavened bread throughout the parishes, which was the sign or symbol. This is the origin of the use of blessed bread, which, even at the present day, is distributed to the faithful on Sundays, and which they carry home; hence the term employed of *communicating*, and also of the custom which I believe is as ancient as the commencement of the Church. The same thing does St. Paul express in the first epistle to the Corinthians,[1] when, under the expression of communicating in the bread and in the chalice of the sacrifices, and in the table of the Old Testament, and in that which is offered to the idols; and in their offerings he distinguishes the three states and sects of the world—the Christians, the Jews, and the Gentiles.

By this is seen the great respect, reverence, and obedience that St. Jerome professed to the Roman Church and to the Pope, and how he seeks refuge and security in that Church, and to her faith only does he trust himself, since her sole authority suffices to put down the proud judgments of those who rise against her and who miserably fall into the abyss.

The second letter contains in substance the same as the aforesaid, that pressure was being used, that the distance was very great, and his place of dwelling so secluded that there was small chance for letters to reach him; and then he goes on to say:[2] "The importunate woman spoken of in the Gospel[3] at length merited to be heard. Although the friend had already retired for the night, his door closed, the young men asleep, nevertheless the friend received the loaves, although she had come at midnight. And even God Himself, Whom no power can

[1] 1 Cor. x. 16, etc. [2] *Epist.* 58, *ad Damasum.* [3] Luke xxiii.

overcome, was conquered by the pleadings of the Publican. The city of Nineveh, which was perishing for its sins, was upheld by the force of tears. But for what purpose seek things of so long ago? Solely that you, who are great, should look on the little one, and in order that you, although you are a rich shepherd, should not despise the ailing sheep. Christ, from His cross, took the thief to Paradise, and so that it might not be thought that his conversion had taken place too late, He transformed that homicide into martyrdom. Christ, too, embraces with joy the prodigal son, who returns. And, leaving the ninety-nine sheep, returns for the one that has strayed away and carries it on His shoulders. Paul, from a persecutor, becomes a preacher, and he is blinded in his material, bodily sight, in order the better to see with the eyes of the soul; and he who had apprehended and taken the servants of Jesus Christ as prisoners before the tribunals of the Jews, now himself *boasts* of the prisons he suffers for Jesus Christ. Hence I who, as I informed you by another letter, received in Rome the investiture of Christ, and now dwell in the deserts dividing the boundaries of the Assyrians and the Barbarians, not because I came here through reason of being sentenced by justice, but I condemned myself to do so on account of my demerits. But in fact, as the Gentile poet[1] says: '*He changeth not his soul but the sky, whosoever crosseth the seas*'; therefore the enemy came to me untired, dogging my steps, for his assaults are fiercer which I suffer from him in the desert. Here the rage and fury of the Arian sect, by the favour of the world, increases cruelly; here the Church is broken into three parts, each part striving to carry all to itself. The monks who reside round about here, with the authority of ancients, rise up against me; meanwhile that I in a loud

[1] Horace.

voice proclaim: 'He that shall unite with the chair of Peter, he, and he alone, is mine; Meletius, Vitalis, and Paulinus, each one tells me he belongs to you.' I might believe it to be so if this were said to me by one, but now that by contrary acts they pursue one another, I say this, either two of them lie, or all three of them; therefore I humbly beseech you, by the cross of the Lord, by what is due to the honour of our faith, and by the passion of Christ, that whereas you bear the apostolic dignity, do you also carry the merit; hence with the twelve do you sit to judge the world: thus may another bind you as Peter, and thus may you attain the dwelling of heaven with St. Paul: and with your letters do you advise me and instruct me as to which of these in Syria I am to communicate with and join; and do not despise this soul for whom Christ died."

These are letters which should not be left unread by any one, and even be perused many times over. It would be well that those who esteem the saint for his great erudition should also admire and trust him in this part and imitate him, bending low their proud necks to the authority of the pontiff in simple obedience, since Jerome, with so much humility and love, inclines his head and his heart.

We have no account of the reply of Damasus to these letters, but by the text of many other letters which these two saintly men wrote to one another it is inferred that he did reply to them. Time and its changes, which consumes everything, has wrought in this particular as with other sacred monuments of the antiquity of the Church. What may be gathered from this is that the holy pontiff, in view of these epistles and the eloquence and erudition in all his letters, conceived a great affection for Jerome. It appears to be the fact that even before he came to

Rome he knew him well, and had written to him several letters asking for declarations on some difficult passages in the Scriptures. Such great fame had this saintly youth already attained. Let us leave this for its proper place, and return to witness the haste with which the heretics—or the devil for them—employed in his regard in order to disquiet that holy soul and drag him out of the remote desert.

When these heretics perceived that they could not shake his opinion, nor overturn the foundations of the stronghold laid upon so firm a rock as that of the obedience and faith of the Church, they turned against him like furious dogs, howling and barking, imputing to him vices, and defaming him in what places they could, and even they, who were themselves heretics, calling him a heretic, proclaiming him as such, as though he could be so who is subject, bound, and obedient to the apostolic See. Their defamations reached to the point that some saintly virgins who lived in observance on Mount Hermon began to withdraw from him. The saint was devoted to them on account of their sanctity; he oftentimes wrote to them, but after they had this evil opinion induced into them, never again would they correspond with him. Jerome, feeling hurt at this, rather on account of the deceit practised on them than of his own hurt, wrote to them in this wise:—

"The small size of the letter and parchment are indicative of solitude, hence I have to condense the copiousness of what I had to say into a small space. I would wish to speak to you in a large manner, and yet the short page forces me to be silent, and thus skill must overcome poverty; the letters are few, while the reasoning is long. In this strait charity aids me, since even the want of the wherewith to write upon prevents me from writing. I beseech you to pardon the wounded one. I say it with

sorrow; I say it with tears, and weepingly, for not even one word have you vouchsafed me in reply, whilst I have performed this duty so often. I am well aware that light does not communicate with the shadows, nor can the sinner form any companionship with the servants of God. But yet, the public sinner bathed with her hands the feet of the Lord, and the dogs eat the crumbs that fell from the table of their masters, and the Saviour Himself did not come to call the just but sinners, for, without any doubt, those in health have no need of a physician; and He desireth more the penitence of the sinner than his death. The strayed sheep He carries on His shoulders; and the father receives with joyful countenance the prodigal son who returns to him. But what do I say? Even the apostle says: Do not judge before the time. Who are you to dare to judge the servant of another? It is for his master to say whether he stands or falls; and he that thinketh he stand, let him take heed lest he fall. And once again he says: Carry each other's burthens. Beloved sisters, in a very different manner does Christ judge than by the evil intentions and envy of men. The sentence given by His audience will not be like that given out in a muttered way in the corners. Many men's lives seem to us now just which later on will appear evil, and in earthen vessels frequently great treasures are hidden. St. Peter, who denied Christ three times, was restored to his first dignity on account of his bitter tears. To whom more is pardoned, greater is his love. No anxiety is expressed in regard to the whole flock of God, yet for the well-being of a sick ewe there is joy among the angels in heaven. And should this appear to any one an unworthy thing, let him hear what the Lord says: 'Friend, if I be good, is that a reason why your eye should be evil?'"[1]

[1] *Epist.* 39, *ad Virg. Hermon.*

I do not find a letter of this saint but what inspires admiration. I know not what more greatly to admire, whether it be sanctity and modesty, or the erudition and beauty of diction. When with the heretics and other suspicious persons he is seen to be rigid, severe, and strong, let him be seen with these holy virgins, cast down, humble and gentle, and then let them from henceforth learn how to give to each thing its due. The implacable enemy, who was weaving the warp of the piece, did not cease his vigilance. The more the saint manifests with humility his innocence by silence and abasement (even to mislead women), so much more does he grow fierce. The affair among the heretics had attained to such a fiery height against the saint that they wreaked upon him all the evil treatment which they could. At length the scheme of the capital enemy is made manifest that he would force Jerome to quit the desert, for with nothing less can his rage find an outlet. Oh! divine judgments! So also does God will it. For this is the common way with Him in dealing with the lives of the saints, yet the ends are different; the one schemes the fall of Jerome, in order to stem the flow of the current towards that sanctity, to which he is journeying, and bring him back to the world; the other to lift him up to great things of His service; to make him a master of perfection in the world, and a great doctor of His Church! God does not wish—no—that his life should be all spent in deserts and solitude; it was all very well to prove him and to exercise him for a time, so that the master of all should taste of everything. After spending four years of a life so rough yet saintly, practising such rigorous penance, the heretics pressed around him so violently with their malice that there were no means strong enough to resist them in a young man, alone in a strange land, without friends or protectors. It occurred to him as

a last resource to withdraw and give in to envy. The saint himself depicts to us the battle and the power the heretics brought on to bear, when writing to Marcus, a priest of Chalcedon, in these words: "I have resolved upon taking advantage of the advice contained in the words of the Psalmist, where he says: '*While the sinner was against me, I was struck dumb and was humbled, and held my peace, and even in what I could have spoken to the purpose, I remained silent.*' And in another part: '*I was like one deaf and did not hear, and as one dumb I did not open my mouth; I am made like a man who hears not.*' But whereas charity rises above all things, and the will is more powerful than the determination or purpose, I do not attempt to excuse myself nor reply to those who grieve me, but only to you who asks me to do so. In good religion he is not hapless, nor does he remain, as it is said, burthened, who receives the injury, but he who does or inflicts the injury. And, as regards the first, before conversing of my faith which you have well known, it is imperative in me to appeal against the barbarism of this place where I dwell, with those verses known to all—

> What lineage of men be this—
> That such barbarous customs permit
> That even will not allow, as a resting-place
> The dry sand itself, rather calls to arms—
> So that we should take port and land?[1]

I bring forward this verse of the Gentile poet because he who does not keep the peace of Christ, at least let him learn the peace of the pagan. They call me a heretic who am preaching and confessing the consubstantiality of the Trinity. They accuse me of being a follower of the heresy of Sabellius whilst confessing with untiring voice three subsistent persons, true, and perfect. Had this

[1] *Æneid*, Virgil.

accusation come from the Arians it would have been even so, bad enough. But if the orthodox and the Catholic reprehend this faith, for that very reason they cease to be what they said they were, and are in truth heretics. If it pleases them, let them condemn me along with the west and with Egypt. I mean to say with Damasus and with St. Peter: Why should they accuse one man only of the sin, putting aside his companions? If the rivulet carries but little water, the fault is not in the canal, but in the flow of the spring. I am ashamed to say it. From the depths of darksome caves and cells we wish to condemn the world; and, enveloped in sackcloth and ashes, we want to sit in judgment on the bishops and on the prelates. What has the tunic of penitence to do with the regal spirit? Chains and garbage, the long growth of the hair and beard are not the insignia of the diadem, but of mourning and of tears. I beseech of them to be permitted to keep silence. Why do they tear to pieces one of whom they need feel no envy? If I be a heretic, what is that to you? Calm yourself — it has been already said. No doubt you fear lest as a man most eloquent in the Syrian and Greek tongues I might run from one church into another, deceiving the people, and forming some schism. Never did I take a single thing off any one, and no one thing do I receive gratis. With the work of our own hands and by the sweat of our brow, do we daily seek for what we are to eat, knowing that it was written by the apostle: *he that worketh not, let him not eat.* These things, venerable and holy Father, does Jesus Christ know, and Him I place as a witness with what pain and groaning I have written these things to you. I have kept silent; perchance am I to keep always silent? says the Lord. Not even a corner in the desert is allowed me; each day I am asked for the faith I profess, as though I

had been regenerated without faith. I confess, as they demand of me to do and wish, but that does not satisfy them. I submit to their opinion and they do not believe it. One only thing do they want, and that is that I should go from hence. Very well, I am going. They wrenched from me the best of my soul; my most cherished brothers wished to go from hence, and they are leaving because they declare that it is better to dwell with wild beasts than with Christians such as these; and I, speaking for myself, say that were I not prevented leaving owing to the great emaciation of my body and the inclemency of the winter, I too would go at once. But meanwhile that I await the summer to come, I earnestly beseech them to grant me permission to dwell these few months in the solitude of the desert; and if even this they should grudge to be too long to wait, I will go at once. Of the Lord's is the earth, and all that there is in it, let them rise alone to Heaven; let it be for them alone that Jesus Christ died. Let them hold, possess, and be glorified, but as for me may God not will other glory than in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to Him. By the faith you had in me to write to me, which faith I gave in writing to the holy Cyril, I declare that he who should not thus believe in, is far from Christ; I have as trusted witnesses of my faith, your ears, and those of the blessed brother Zenobius, to whom together with you, all such as are here with me send much greeting."

From this letter we might gather much. The wild persecutions of the heretics and their fury are made clear, since neither in one way or the other did they allow the holy monk to rest, and it also appears that many of these were themselves monks; hence the great humility and suffering of his soul are made manifest; the great love

he had for the desert; how earnestly he had undertaken to lead the life of an angel, since he comes to say that which St. Paul did—that he is as much crucified to the world as the world is to him. From this is inferred what great favours he must have received from Heaven, what consolations, what visits—for in the midst of so much roughness and so many persecutions, his soul lives with such exquisite pleasure, that he is broken-hearted at the thought that he must quit the place. The conversation he held with his holy companions was very sweet, their persons and their feet stood materially there on earth, but their conversation and intercommunion was of heaven, and in Heaven were all things. Every time, when, after this the saint has occasion to speak of this period of his life and this dwelling, it can well be perceived how deep is the feeling and the grief he experienced at its loss, and he usually says in regard to it, the words of David: *Lord, one day in the courts of Thy house is better than a thousand in the dwellings of kings.*[1] In the epistle he wrote to his great friend Pammachius, he renews this memory and says: "I was not then in Rome, because the desert held me, and would to God that it held me always"; and other expressions to the same effect. At length Jerome came forth from the desert, or better said, God drew him out, working by the hand of the enemy His own cause and that of the Church. With this tool is her living stones chiselled; with it is polished the lives of the saints. Jerome comes forth from this seclusion quite another man, because, although he entered a saint, he draws now a new taste and light for the things of Heaven, instructed in continual contemplation and prayer. He comes forth, as it were, tanned by so many trials and rough usage, tried by so many illnesses, full of the divine

[1] *Epist.* 26.

revelations by which he has been disillusioned of all human glories vain and perishable. He comes forth in a word, learned in three languages owing to his new studies of the Hebrew, and we might say four, or indeed many more, for he also learned the Syrian, Arabic, and Aramaic tongues, and all those common languages of the east which are of great importance in assisting to attain the perfect knowledge of the holy language. Lastly, he comes forth lashed by so good a hand as that of the Divine One, in order that now all surrendered into His school, he should not slip off into the profane one, content with what remained in the archives of his memory, sufficient for the requirements of his present one.

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

St. Jerome dwells in Antioch. Is ordained Priest by the Patriarch Paulinus. Becomes a Disciple of Apollinaris. Proceeds to Constantinople to study under St. Gregory Nazianzen. St. Jerome returns to Palestine. He corresponds with St. Damasus.

It is held certain that when the holy doctor left the desert, he had already received the advice and reply from Pope Damasus as to what he should do, bidding him proceed to Antioch, and there to communicate with Bishop Paulinus, one of three we have said, who had caused a division in the Church. Nicephorus Callistus tells us that this Paulinus was a modest man, very circumspect, of exemplary piety, great holiness of life, and a staunch adherent to the holy Roman Church. Jerome, like an obedient son, went at once direct to him. He continued in his company for a considerable time, ever the same, ever the monk and the solitary, and leading as penitential a life as he had done in the desert. In what appertained to the study of sacred letters he never neglected it, or was ever idle; and at the time he was at the height of his fervour, and at the period when he most delighted in perusing the Scriptures, forasmuch as the veil had been removed from his eyes, as to the deceitfulness of profane books.. It so happened that at this time the erudite

Apollinaris, Bishop of Syria, was at Antioch.[1] There were two of the same name, father and son, both very learned. Nicephorus does not say that one of them was Bishop of Laodicea; of the father he says, he was a priest, and the son was lector, and it was when he held this position that the son withdrew from the Church. Yet we ought to give greater credence to St. Jerome, who not only saw them, but held intercourse with both, and the list of illustrious personages styles the one Bishop of Laodicea.[2] So also does Theodoret in his history when he recounts the differences existing between Paulinus, Meletius, and Vitalis, but narrates them somewhat differently from Nicephorus. What I do know to have been the case in this affair was that the affairs of the Church of Antioch were at the time in a very disturbed state, owing to the divers heresies then existing, that of Arius on one side, and those of Apollinaris on the other, and the schism of the bishops, which only further disturbed everything, for even among themselves they could not understand one another. Hence it is no wonder if authors disagree about the issue.

The reason why our saint approached the Bishop Paulinus we have already touched upon. From which we gather the reason why he would not communicate with Meletius, who was a most saintly man, for the writers of that period all praise him. Some style him "most holy," others "divine," and others again most meek; but for all that he had been consecrated by the Arians, and this was a matter of much suspicion to Jerome as well as to others. Therefore, being under the authority of that part of the Church ruled by Paulinus, Jerome, without heeding its revolts, or interfering in the pretensions of the bishops and of the world, for all these at the time were the offices and

[1] Niceph. lib. 17, cap. 12.

[2] Theod. lib. 5, cap. 3.

ministries of the Holy Ghost, carried his soul full of other affections and desires. He discoursed on naught else but of the law of God, and wheresoever this language was listened to there would he resort. And as Apollinaris was as learned as fame tells us, and the saint as humble as we know him to be, he did not disdain to frequent for a short time his school. Jerome listened to him, culled from his discourses the best that was in him, enjoyed his genius, but what was not his best he put aside. This conduct does he himself declare he followed when writing to Pammachius and Oceanus.[1] "Alas! says Isaias to such that say evil is good and good evil: those who make bitter sweet and what is sweet bitter. We must not speak evil of the good we see in our adversaries, nor praise the vices of friends, nor weigh the worth of each one by his person, but by the value which his things have and which we see. Lucilius is reprehended because he is not a very polished poet, nor his metre smooth, but his wit and subtleties are lauded by all. When I was a youth I burned with desires of knowledge, and I do not wish, as many others presume, to teach myself nor be my own master. Many times did I listen to Apollinaris Laodicensis in Antioch, and I esteemed him greatly, and although he instructed me in the sacred scriptures, yet not for that did his pertinacious opinions please me any more than his bad doctrine." This is a good counsel of St. Jerome, worthy of his spirit and discretion. Of the error of Apollinaris there is no need to give an account here, for it is nothing to our purpose. Such as desire to know further, and understand radically the differences of Antioch, may read the authors contemporary with him.

In many other places does our saint mention Apollinaris, and never does he disclaim having been a disciple of his,

[1] *Epist.* 63.

and always under the conditions and reserve I have already stated, in order to profit from the good in him, yet without turning his eyes or even casting a glance upon what was evil. Many, through not doing this, and being so sensitive in regard to every small defect which they meet which does not please them, lose the enjoyment of a thousand treasures, as though pearls laid among a small portion of straw could lose their intrinsic value as pearls. Great geniuses often fall owing to their singular opinions, which commonly are not pleasing, yet not for that should we despise them; rather we should proceed very carefully with them, and listen to them, for they usually have most singular and beautiful ideas, and sometimes it so happens that in what they most displease us is just in what they are most excellent. I say this as regards ordinary things, for in what relates to religion we know our path and what are the rules of the Church. These rules had not been so strictly laid down or defined in the time of St. Jerome, as they are at present. The heretics were mixed up with the Catholics, and among them were men so grave and learned that oftentimes they carried with them the greater part of the oriental Church. Moreover, it was most difficult at that age, when so few councils had as yet been held, to establish the complete integrity of the dogmas. The saintly doctor lost not a single point of the monastic life in the midst of the city. There he walked, his soul and body wrapped in the seclusion of the desert, and in the silence of that solitude into which God takes His own when He speaks to the heart. Jerome never put aside his continual penances, nor gave up his watchfulness, nor did he interrupt other exercises of his early life, like one who in all earnestness had undertaken to follow the state of perfection without turning his head to look back. At times, impelled by divine desires and

the soul's yearning to quit this prison of earth, he would rise above to dwell alone in those pastures of love. Then he would proceed to visit the places in the Holy Land, the fire commencing to be kindled of that great love he subsequently bore them. But whether he bent his steps there, or whether he proceeded elsewhere, wherever he might go for diverse reasons, he ever remained the strictest of monks, ever the same and always advancing, like to one of the angels of Jacob's ladder who were never idle or still. Paulinus considered all this with great attention, for he was a man of lofty judgment. He perceived united together in this youth not only great erudition and letters, but also exalted religion and consummate virtue. He judged that it would be to the great advantage of the Church and to himself, that he should be a priest, both because Jerome could then help him in everything that might be necessary in his office, as also that he might prove him and honour him for his merits. This he put into practice. He ordained him priest, despite the resistance offered by the saint, who deeply felt himself unworthy to be raised to so high a dignity, because, as he was so learned he well knew what the priesthood was, and how much it would entail upon him. It also appeared to him that the state of a humble religious, and that of a lowly monk, poor and solitary, did not accord with so much grandeur, and he therefore offered all the resistance he could.

The saintly prelate, however, prevailed, and even compelled him by obedience to accept the dignity. All this does our glorious doctor briefly signify in an epistle[1] which he wrote to Pammachius against the errors of John of Jerusalem, and which we quoted above.

That Paulinus was the Bishop of Antioch who ordained

[1] *Epist.* 61.

Jerome priest is proved, because in the same epistle,[1] speaking with the said John, he says as follows: "If what you say about being ordained without your license and within your jurisdiction, you understand it of me and of the holy priest Vincentius, you in truth have been asleep in this affair, since at the lapse of thirteen years you now awake. Let me inform you, that for this did I leave Antioch and he Constantinople, cities of such renown, forasmuch as we did not contemplate exercising the office of the priesthood for the praise and the applause of the people, but in order to weep over the sins of our early youth in solitude and in the wilderness, and thus draw upon us the mercy of Jesus Christ." This passage fully declares what we quoted above of St. Epiphanius, writing to the same Bishop of Jerusalem, in which the saint says that Vincentius and Jerome, on account of their great humility and modesty, did not wish to exercise the office of priests among their brethren. Great indeed was the humility of our saint, very different from such as undertake these sacred offices for vain motives. Saints more greatly esteem that the Holy Ghost should make His dwelling in them by the gift of sanctification than with that which appertains to the ministry and office, hence they easily would leave the latter so as to embrace the former, because to have been for many years bishop or archbishop will not enable a man to go to heaven, but it will do so to have been humble of heart, and to have the fear of God and of His precepts. For this reason did our Lord and Master say, that unless our justice exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees we should not enter the kingdom of God. This our Lord declared even of good Scribes and Pharisees, who in reality had the justice of the law, but not that of the Gospel, and also did He include in the number those who among

[1] *Epist.* 61, cap. 16.

themselves were accounted just and despised others, calling them by a low and contemptuous word, *populus terræ*, a people who did not rise from the ground, nor could they be equalled with them in any way. It was this that our saint wished to fly from in the new dignity, not because it naturally follows it, but because pride takes advantage of it for its hurt.

Some may question why St. Jerome joined Paulinus rather than Meletius,—for as St. Gregory Nazianzen, Nicephorus Callistus, and other Greeks declare, he was found to be an Arian; and it appears that the doctor himself says the same in the epistles quoted above which he sent to Damasus, wherein he expresses himself equally suspicious of the three. We have already touched upon the reason of this, and that, despite the suspicion, it was charged on him by Pope Damasus. The most solid reason is found to be that Paulinus, as many Greek writers refer, among them St. Basil in his Epistle to Terentius (?)[1] (which epistle, although not in print yet exists in some original manuscripts) was that the Roman Church always held him to be a Catholic, and as such was confirmed by St. Damasus in the Pontifical chair of Antioch, this is declared by Socrates in his history, as well as by Nicephorus. This being so, Jerome, who was ever obedient to the apostolic chair, could not do otherwise than attach himself to Paulinus. It is true to say that Nazianzen and his friend Basil felt aggrieved that Meletius should have been excluded and Paulinus admitted. However, as they were not personally known to him, they did not make any complaint. I have been unable to ascertain how it could be that both Nicephorus and Theodoretus in the aforesaid places, should have said that both were Bishops of Antioch until their death, and that a decree

[1] Mariana, *in Schol. Epist.* 61, D. Hier.

had been promulgated to all the clergy that so long as these two lived no other should be admitted to the dignity. Be it what it may, for it does not concern the aim of our history, we at least can gather how deeply our saint could be ruled by obedience to the Pope, and how for him, in such cases as these, it was an infallible rule; and it also remains investigated that it was this Paulinus who ordained him; because some are mistaken who believe that it was another Paulinus, Bishop of Tréves, who was more remote even than St. Hilary; a thing quite out of place, for it could not possibly have been our saint, for it was in the time of Constantius, and after the Synod of Arles that he was exiled, because he refused to sign the Condemnation of St. Athanasius, which was then published, as Sulpicius refers.

That great thirst which St. Jerome confesses he experienced for the study of the sacred letters made him, as we have said, to be always seeking where to satisfy and quench it. At that period St. Gregory Nazianzen was famous, called by excellence "the Theologian," and St. Jerome was minded to visit him, and be his disciple in earnest. He journeyed to Greece. I believe on this occasion he was at Athens, because he himself declares it when expounding[1] the twelfth chapter of Zacharias the prophet, where occurs the following words: "*I will make Jerusalem a burthensome stone to all the people; all that shall lift it up shall be rent and torn;*" the saint says that in Palestine it was the custom, and one which existed in his time, of placing round stones like boulders to mark the division of property, and that many resorted there to try their strength by lifting the heaviest and the greater number. Some would lift them as far as their knees, others to the waist, while others even placed them on

[1] Zacharias xii. 3.

their heads. For this purpose, in the Palace of Athens, close to the statue of Minerva, he saw a ball of metal of enormous weight, but which he could not even move owing to his state of weakness and want of power. "On my asking," says the saint, "for what purpose it was placed there, the citizens replied that this ball was the test for wrestlers and gladiators; they came there to try their courage and their strength, and no one was permitted to come forth in the theatre and place of wrestling and combat until he, by raising that globe, should prove his power, and thus manifest against whom he might combat." From this ancient custom our doctor draws the original meaning of this passage in Zacharias, as it would be difficult otherwise to understand the similitude of the prophet. And in passing we wish to draw attention to the great importance of peregrinations, wherein are witnessed and observed the usages and customs of different lands, to which allusion is oftentimes made in metaphors, not only in the Holy Books, but by other writers. In all places do wise men find something to learn, and all things, in time, are of profit to them.

The fame of Gregory for sanctity and letters continued to increase throughout the world. Jerome sought him out and found him in Constantinople, where he had come to at the time in order to arrange certain differences in favour of Catholics against the Arians. He had been brought there in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius I. previous to the Council of Constantinople, this Council being one of the four General Councils which St. Gregory Pope declared he held in as much respect as the four Gospels. This was during the early years of the Pontificate of Damasus. The great doctor of the Church St. Gregory Nazianzen carried the business through with such skill and tact, and so lifted up the faith and placed

the affairs of the Catholics on such a firm footing, that all things became altered. He was made Bishop, and, joining together doctrine and authority, in a very short space of time not a single Arian dared to appear in the city. Of his discipleship under such a master St. Jerome is justly proud, and in many places in his works does he mention him. In the *Catalogue of Illustrious Men* he styles him a most eloquent man, and that he was his preceptor from whom he had learned sacred letters as he had heard him expound them. In the Epistle to Nepotian he says:[1] "Gregory Nazianzen, who formerly had been my preceptor, on my beseeching him to declare to me what was meant by that passage in St. Luke[2] *Sabbatum deuteroproton*, id est, *secundo primum*, he, with charming courtesy, replied to me, saying, "I will demonstrate this to you over there in the church, where, amid the applause of the people, you will have to confess, whether you will or no, that you understand what you do not understand, and if you will not agree to this, not joining in the applause, but keeping silent, you will be held by all to be very ignorant." The saintly theologian here distinctly acknowledges to the wise disciple that he does not know the passage, nothing offering itself to him which could satisfy the genius of so clever a disciple, and thus he gave him this graceful repartee, manifesting that it is an easy thing for a man who has won the favour and the taste of the people to make men believe anything he should say. To this most learned Nazianzen there was wanting some knowledge of Hebrew traditions and customs, for had he had such knowledge he could have given some explanation had he understood the passage, which means nothing else but the *second day* of the feast after the first and principal one of the great Week, called thus the Passover of the

[1] *Epist.* 2, cap. 10.

[2] Luke vi. 1.

Lamb. The first day was called *primo primum*, and the second day *secundo primum*. Writing upon the sixth chapter of Isaias again does he say[1] that, being in Constantinople with his master Gregory Nazianzen, who was bishop of that city, and the one who had instructed him in the sacred Scriptures, he made a short treatise on the vision of the prophet to test his genius, and also to comply with the request of some of his friends who had besought him to do so. Thirty years had passed since the saint had written the treatise when he dictated this exposition on Isaias ; nevertheless it appears to him that it should be assigned to him as it is done. From this may be inferred how great was his erudition and doctrine, and how much greater still his humility, for being what he was, yet he does not disdain to become his disciple. Let us therefore glance over this exposition of the vision of Isaias in order to fully understand who and what was Jerome at that time, both in letters as in virtue.

In two epistles written to Damasus is the exposition divided by which St. Jerome gave a proof of his genius. These epistles bear comparison with any writing of the most erudite ever issued by the Greek and Latin churches. It may be well said that in what Jerome tested his hand, and, as it were, commenced his genius, other gifted doctors of the church ended theirs. Oh, good disciple! At the pleading of his friends he tells us did he undertake the task, and it was in obedience to them, for he was ordered to do so. I believe it was Damasus who was the chief among these, and he could not but obey him. The Holy Pontiff, charmed with these epistles as well as with others he had seen, and delighted at the renown this saintly youth enjoyed, asked him for many other declarations later on. When expounding those words of the Apostle

[1] *Comment. in Isai.* c. 6.

to the Ephesians, *This is a great Sacrament*, he says as follows:[1] "Gregory Nazianzen, a most eloquent man and very learned in the sacred writings, when I discussed with him this passage, used to say, 'Do you not see how great is the mystery and hidden meaning of this chapter? For when the apostle wrote it he interpreted of Christ and His Church, and he affirms that he does not declare the depth with the grandeur and dignity which it demands, but only in some part.'" He also refers[2] that, being together with his master Gregory Nazianzen, the brother of the great Basil, called Gregory of Nyssa, read to them some of his works. By this is seen the great humility of the saint, who, although it is true he calls himself a disciple, and declares he learned of Apollinaris and of Gregory Nazianzen and others, yet by the way they all discoursed together it is evident that they learned as much from Jerome as he from them.

At this period Jerome was much advanced in the knowledge of the Hebrew as well as the Syrian language, of which we have grounds to suppose these doctors did not possess. This was a great advantage, and is well manifested in the treatise on the exposition of the vision of Isaias, and others he wrote before coming to Rome. After Jerome had enjoyed the doctrine and intercourse with Gregory Nazianzen, he decided to return to Palestine. I believe the desire for solitude and for the monastic life had taken possession of his soul. In some measure the dissensions which were rife at this time in Constantinople carried some weight in the decision, for we find they increased day by day, because the children of that period knew not how to be quiet, nor allowed others to enjoy quietude; they were, and are, the goats in the flock of the Church until they be separated and set on the left hand.

[1] *Comment. ad Eph.* 5.

[2] *In Catalog. Illust.*

Despite all that St. Gregory was, there arose against him envious men who could not endure that the city of Constantinople should enjoy such a pastor, and who declared he could not be bishop of this city, because, without synodal determination and authority, he had left the previous bishopric of Nazianzen and had entered the one of Constantinople. On witnessing such disquietude of spirit, Gregory decided to yield to their evil designs and leave that see, and this decision he put in execution. Neither did he wish that one Maximus Cynicus should remain whom the Arians had elected, so that he should not revert to his first state; and he placed one Nectarius, a man of great virtue and very learned, who was received with much applause by all. Furthermore, Gregory did not wish to return to his first chair of Nazianzen, because the saintly prelate did not set his heart on these dignities. He issued orders for Eulalius to be elected to the bishopric, meanwhile that he himself withdrew to an estate he had of his own to dwell there for the remainder of his life, leading a saintly existence with great calmness of spirit.

As we have said, Jerome returned to Palestine, and proceeded to visit Bethlehem. I cannot say whether this was his first visit, but now he commenced to foster a deep devotion to this spot, so holy and so full of tender memories. He continued there for some time; this fact I am quite convinced of, for he on his return spoke of the place as familiar to him, which he would not have done had it been for the first time. Whilst dwelling here in solitude and retirement, with only such few conveniences as a monk of such a strict life would allow himself, he enjoyed a thousand favours from heaven, his soul enraptured in divine thoughts, enjoying an almost continual contemplation, lifted above all visible things until he

became bound in the bonds of a most intimate love with the Supreme Good and his loving Jesus. At this period Jerome received some letters from Pope Damasus which aroused him from the sweet slumber of contemplation, by propounding questions and points from the sacred scriptures. Such was the credit Jerome already enjoyed in Rome, and so great the fame of his genius and learning, which had spread everywhere. Indeed it is a great subject of marvel that so wise and saintly a pontiff as Damasus should take notice of a youth dwelling so far away in remote lands, when so many very great and grave doctors flourished in those days—indeed perhaps the most celebrated the Church had held—were at hand; yet he seems to have cast them in oblivion, and turns his eyes on Jerome, and to him alone does he discover his doubts and asks a solution of them. It was due to this galaxy of celebrated divines surrounding Damasus that some authors say the title of Glorious was prefixed to this pope. By this may be seen that the Spanish pope and saint had good taste, and that by the *claws* he had perceived the *lion*, and from his brief letters he traced and scented great things. And in truth his judgment did not deceive him, as will be made manifest in the course of this history.

Among other letters which Damasus penned to Jerome, affectionate and becoming a fatherly heart, the first was the one in which occurs the following: "I have determined to rouse you who have been now a long time in the sweet slumbers of prayer and contemplation, caring naught but for reading since you have not attempted to write anything, by sending to you for some explanations concerning certain points and questions—not that it be not right for you to read, which I am well aware is to you like daily bread, and a food by means of which prayer is maintained and strengthened; but were you to write the fruit might

be gathered from the lesson, for when sending back Etherius the messenger you stated you had no longer any of the epistles save those which you on one occasion had written in the desert, and which I read diligently and with great pleasure, and which I transcribed; moreover of your own accord you promised to steal some moments at night, if I wished you to write something for me. I now accept with great goodwill what you offered me, and indeed should you refuse me, even so I would still beseech you to do so. I do not think we could choose for our conversation a more worthy subject to treat upon between us than the sacred letters. I mean to say, I, to question you, and you to reply. I assure you that as for me there could be no sweeter life, because this pasture and food of the soul exceeds the sweetness of the honeycomb. How sweet, says the prophet, are Thy words to my mouth, O Lord! Sweeter than honey are they to my mouth." Such reasons as these, and others as humble and loving, does he proceed to declare. He then puts to him some difficult, grave questions. Jerome replied to these questions in a famous letter,[1] these questions being replied and treated briefly and in a masterly manner, their difficulties dispelled clearly and firmly. The beginning of the reply runs in this form: "On receiving the letter of your holiness I at once summoned a scribe. I bade him write, while I prepared what I was to do, and thinking within myself what I should say, scarcely moving my tongue and the scribe his pen, there unexpectedly entered in a Hebrew, loaded with many books taken from the synagogue, as though to peruse them, and at once exclaimed, 'Stay! I have here with me what you wish and had asked for.' He left me in doubt and confusion, without knowing what to do, for I was disturbed at his

[1] *Epist.* 125.

haste, but nevertheless I put aside all else, and with all possible diligence I began to transcribe, and up to the present I have done nothing else. But as Etherius, the deacon you sent me, tells me that you are waiting, as you yourself say, for a letter, and I think you expect a great commentary, and you desire a reply in brief on the things, each of which would require a full commentary and a volume to itself, I write this as a hurried affair, rude and undigested."

Farther on he adds: "The *Book of the Holy Ghost of Didymus* I have in hand, and which I purpose to dedicate to you after it is translated, in order that you may not deem that I am slumbering, since you judge that the lesson without the writing is but a dreamed thing. I set down here what I deem right to the questions you ask me at the end of your letter, at the same time asking pardon for the haste and the delay—of the haste because I attempted to dictate in one night what in truth really demands the work of many days—of the delay, because, being detained in other things, I did not at once reply to what you asked me."

From this appears that the two saints often wrote to one another, and, to our misfortune, these great treasures of their letters are lost to us, along with many others which time and its changes have consumed. From these losses has resulted the fact that bold men have dared to pose themselves as Jerome and Damasus, writing spurious letters with assumed titles (as though pearls could not be distinguished from coals), and thought that all other men were men of as simple a judgment as they were themselves. Beyond the letters we have stated, there are no other letters from Damasus to Jerome beyond the one he wrote to him asking what did the Gospel mean by *Hosanna filio David*, and the reply of the

saintly doctor, which is of equal value and gravity as are the others.[1] All those that are scattered about are spurious and fictitious. I hold it as a happy augury that the first monuments of the divine genius of Jerome should have been consecrated to Damasus, the Spanish pope, and that Spain should glory no less in having produced that saintly pontiff than in such writings as these.

[1] In t. 4. *Secundum Eras.* in t. 9. *Secundum Mariam.*

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

St. Jerome returns to Rome; assists Pope Damasus in all affairs of the Church

The empire and rule of Theodosius still continued, and the saintly Pontiff Damasus yet governed the spiritual state; both were princes of the most gifted order which the world has seen. It was a great glory for Spain that at one and the same epoch two of her sons should be at the head of the empires of the world,—in the spiritual world and in the temporal; both so zealous for the public good, so careful of their respective offices, so well meaning for the relief and eradication of all evils, both equally great in spirit and in courage to execute all that was needed in whatever wants and occasions offered themselves. The holy prelate and the pious Emperor, perceiving the dissensions which existed in many of the churches of the east and of the west respecting divers affairs—some on account of the faith, others in respect to customs, and others again touching particular pretensions, more especially in the case of the Church of Antioch, which had been so deeply wounded many days before by the schism of the three prelates, Meletius, Paulinus, and Vitalis, who were considered by some to be in heresy—decided to interpose their authority in all things. It was ordained by letters, the emperor on the temporal side, and the pope on

the spiritual one, which were sent to nearly all the bishops of the various parts for them to repair one and all to Rome, in order to have an investigation of affairs, and to receive instructions as to what should be done, as well as to enable each one to reply to the accusations and charges which had been laid and published against them. Among those who arrived in answer to the summons was Paulinus of Antioch, at whose hands our holy doctor had received his ordination as priest, and Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia, or Salamina in Cyprus, men of great sanctity and letters, and both great friends of each other and mutual ones of Jerome. It seemed opportune to the Greek bishops to take, as some say, the learned Latin divine Jerome with them, forasmuch as he had already acquired a great name, and also because, as one who had dwelt in Antioch and at various times in Cyprus, he might be to them of great advantage in their affairs, by keeping the pontiff informed, whensoever the occasion should present itself, retaining him as a trustworthy witness in their defence. These bishops were well aware of the intimacy which existed between Jerome and Damasus from the letters and the messengers which frequently had passed between them, even before they had any personal knowledge of each other, known only by the credit and reputation they were held in. All these motives were efficacious reasons to urge these holy prelates willingly to take Jerome in their company; yet, for all that, I believe that they could not have urged any reasons of sufficient weight to have induced him to draw away from his beloved Bethlehem, to which, as we have said before, he had withdrawn himself, nor would they have persuaded him to quit it in order to interfere in the affairs of a third party, however friendly he might be. The reason, as a fact, was that they compelled him to go with

them, forced to it by letters from the Emperor and the Pope. By so doing Damasus had found a good occasion for drawing into his company and power Jerome, an event he greatly desired, fully comprehending how advantageous it would be to retain him at his side, and how restful to himself, for the saint would lighten the burthen of duties consequent on his charge.

The Church at that epoch had extended throughout the known world. In Asia, in Africa, and Europe there existed an infinite number of churches: the temples of the idols were few, indeed nearly extinct; there were no other sects, but a few Arians and these hardly dared to appear publicly; there were many learned men spread about all the provinces of these countries. As a consequence the business and the difficulties of the apostolic chair were becoming infinite. Then commenced to rise heresies, sects, fictions, and novelties which were very wearing; many controversies and schisms followed in the train, and this most prudent pontiff judged that no more opportune occasion would arise than to have Jerome at his side to attend on and rule such a stream of things; a man in whom he could safely place many affairs and who would be able to reply by mouth and pen to all the epistles and suits of every kind and language, and fully satisfy by one genius all the geniuses however great and deep they might be found to be. Undoubtedly it was by the inspiration of heaven that this thought was conceived. Damasus enjoined by his letters, aided by those of the Emperor, that among the summoned bishops Jerome should come to Rome without admitting any possible excuse to the contrary. As regards the pious prelates, this mandate which had come so opportunely to them must have been very welcome. It appears, indeed, to have been the fact that the saint came to Rome

forced very much against the projects and the intentions with which he had quitted that city, as is gathered from the words of an epistle[1] of his written to the virgin Principia in the epitaph of Marcella, wherein among many things he said in her praise, occurs the following: "Forasmuch as the authority and needs of the Church brought me to Rome, together with the holy prelates Epiphanius and Paulinus, the one ruling the Church of Antioch in Syria and the other Salamina in Cyprus, I endeavoured with all reserve and bashfulness to withdraw my eyes from the Roman matrons and ladies, but so much skill was brought to bear, as the apostle says, in *season and out of season*, that at length my mortification and embarrassment had to be overcome. And whereas I was considered to have attained some knowledge of the holy Scriptures, never did he speak to me but he would ask me something in respect to them, nor was he easily satisfied." From this is clearly seen that he came to Rome by constraint. The same thing did he affirm in the epitaph[2] of St. Paula, where he declares that his coming to Rome was due to imperial letters. And it was full time—for our saint had passed the thirtieth year of his youth and strength—that he should commence in things of such gravity and of such moment to help his mother the Church, and labour for her, relieving the burthen from the shoulders of his pastor and father of a great portion of its weight, and shifting it on his own to favour the Christian republic; since it was for this that God had brought him to a state of so much power and virtue, and it was not in reason that so bright a luminary should be hidden away in the desert among crags and brambles, solely dwelling in the company of rustic monks, for as he himself expresses it "holy rusticity profits itself alone."

[1] *Epist.* 16. c. 3.

[2] *Epist.* 27. c. 2.

Jerome came to Rome; but what route he took, or how he came, or what trials he endured, we know not, there exists no record. Nor indeed would any records have existed of his other journeys but for his rivals giving him the opportunity to do so. This we do owe them, for they forced the saint by their envy to declare to us the details of his life. Here it comes opportune to state in passing, in order that the fact be not forgotten, and for the instruction of such as are rebels against the Apostolic See, that it is no new invention of yesterday, but a very ancient fact from the very beginning of Christianity, for all churches and prelates of the whole world to come for judgment, and to acknowledge obedience to, the city of Rome, as being the head of the Church and mother, and to recognise that Chair and Seat as the highest and first whence depends all causes, whether divine or forensic ones which appertain to faith and customs. St. Jerome manifests this in the Epistles which we have already quoted, by two clear examples in the case of the bishops, and in the fact of the prelates of the East and the West who had been now summoned; and going much farther back in the case of St. Athanasius and St. Peter, both bishops of Alexandria, from which is proved conclusively their subjection and recognition of the Chair of Rome, and that throughout the ages the sentence had been carried out, spoken by our Lord to St. Peter: "*And you being once converted, confirm your brethren.*" Hence, the saintly prelates came to Rome and with them also our Jerome. I cannot say where he took up his residence; he only says in the epitaph of St. Paula, that Epiphanius took up his residence in the house of this holy matron, and that Paulinus, although he really was in another house, yet was treated as her own guest, for she even waited on and served him. If we are unable to state that

Paulinus and Jerome dwelt together we can at least say with sufficient probability that Pope Damasus had him as his guest, so as not to allow him to depart, and from the very first his desire was to enjoy his society, since it was for himself alone that he had brought him to Rome. On coming to this city who can doubt that he revisited those places where he had been brought up, where he had spent some sweet years of his early youth, where he had learnt his first letters, and where he had received the vesture of Christ? He would refresh his spirit by these visits; again would he enter the holy sepulchres and grottoes of the cemeteries wherein were deposited the dust of those men who, with generous souls, had spilt their blood in return for the blood of Christ; often must he have recalled to mind how in other days he had wandered about, his mind filled with childish thoughts, yet already full of the mercy of heaven as far as his childish mind could hold; yet now he would view these scenes with other eyes, with more ardent and manly thoughts, his heart swelling with generous courage to suffer as much himself and march on beneath the banner of his Captain, following and pursuing the track of the enemy whom he had already conquered in a thousand encounters. Here he enjoyed the society of his great friend Pammachius and that of the fellow-students of his early years. Mutually would their countenances be bathed in tears of joy. They would look at one another and again on Jerome—but so altered that they hardly could recognise him, thin, emaciated, bronzed, dry, without colour, a man of bones, his hair unkempt, his eyes sunken, the eyeballs inflamed by the continual running of hot tears, his habit poor, patched, coarse—a veritable representation of an Elias, a Job, or an Anthony, in his speech, in his apparel, in his manner—all denoted the hermit of a rough life, of a monk full of perfection, of

a man truly crucified to the world and transformed into Jesus Christ. They would be absorbed contemplating his presence, and would say to him: "O Jerome! how greatly have the hopes we had formed of you been realised; and those promises of your early years how they have been fulfilled! Happy you, who so early in life did commence to try the sweet yoke of the Lord! Happy indeed in whom so quickly were engrafted the aims which the Holy Spirit breathed in you, even at an age when these inspirations could scarcely have been felt, and hapless indeed are those who like ourselves never knew how to obtain freedom from the bonds of the world, from the cupidity of the flesh, the pride of life, nor have attained to open the door at the knocking of so many inspirations as God has offered us."

Many other things of this sort must his friends have said to him, full of joy and a kind of holy emulation. Often would they question him as to how he had fared in that frightful solitude where they knew he had withdrawn himself to follow such strict penance, how he had spent his life; what companions he had, what fare, where did they sleep; what manner of life they led, what was the tenour of their conversation; what exercises did they follow, and many other things that would suggest themselves, never wearying of conversing with him and enjoying his company. The friendships that are formed in the early years of study remain very firmly fixed, and are never forgotten. They dearly loved him, and he in his turn reciprocated that affection; and despite that they were men of grave pursuits, love made all these details to be of interest. Those who had never seen or conversed with him as they had, yet knew him by repute for his great gifts, hastened to see him, to hear and converse with him as with a miraculous being, and one and all held

Rome to be fortunate indeed, and singularly blessed, that had reared up so splendid a plant. Some praised him for his sanctity and exterior modesty, a great index of an interior soul. Others were in admiration of his erudition and letters, others again lauded his great knowledge of a variety of tongues that he possessed, while others were struck by his urbanity and polished manner, his courteous style, not appearing as a man who had dwelt among beasts but amid the angels, for in truth the most polished man of society would have judged Jerome to have spent his time in the study of good breeding. Rome is, and has always been, the resort of all peoples and of singular intellects, owing to the fact that she is the centre of learning towards which all nations turn. Rome was, under pagan princes who were the lords of the world, in the same way as later on she altogether bent in submission to the Vicars of Christ; hence in all ages in Rome could be found all that was desirable of skill and genius and singular talents. In the time of Damasus this concourse of talent was seen in a more excellent and abundant manner; and furthermore, owing to the meeting together of the various churches of the east and of the west, Rome was full to its utmost capacity. Throughout the land was spread the report of the coming of Jerome, the man so eminently distinguished for sanctity and doctrine. Every one desired to see him, and all wished to measure words with him. Those who were dedicated to the study of the sacred writings, when they conferred with him, judged that in this study alone he must have spent his life, and that life seemed in truth too short to have acquired so much knowledge. Such as were exercised in the spiritual life and accustomed to the highest contemplation, and to the bliss which in such moments the soul enjoys, when they conversed with him on the subject, felt the time speed on like a

bird on the wing, because, from the great practice of this exercise the soul was deft in mounting high; yet they were in admiration to see how much he had progressed in this kind of life, and to perceive in him so much experience in comparison of his age, for in acquiring much less experience many more years are required to attain to it. While the counsels he gave on this subject, the craft of Satan which he was wont to discover, the difficulty that exists in acquiring discernment of spirits (indeed the greatest known on earth), he would level down by enlightened reasoning gathered from the gospels where they are scattered about with great subtlety and declared by the Lord Himself. Those who were skilled in human letters and in good philosophy and other erudite studies, judged it were almost impossible for him to have done anything else from his birth but occupy his whole time in these studies, and in this his marvellous memory was a great factor. Such as had a good knowledge of languages, especially of the Hebrew which he constantly had on his lips, declared as Jews, many of whom frequented Rome from the former captivities, that he must have been brought up in the synagogue, and that, moreover, he must have drawn out its secrets from the most learned Rabbis. Those learned in the purest Greek and Syriac marvelled much at the great propriety and the diction with which he handled tongues and dialects. Some would hold him to be an Athenian, others for a man of Jerusalem; such as followed the study of antiquity and history, and who had spent their time in their research, could not be convinced that the knowledge which he possessed could have been acquired by ordinary means. Yet, what caused most surprise and admiration was to see him treating upon such arduous affairs as were entrusted to him to carry through, or had been communicated to him; it seemed in truth as though

he had compassed the whole of jurisprudence, and that he possessed a deep experience of all schemes, issues, pleadings, and means for arranging and facilitating the law, with all the clearness and acumen of one accustomed to the curia and the forum.

Such was the Jerome whom Rome now received. Such the delight his presence caused the learned men, since they desired to wrestle with him, see, and converse with him. To such a degree did this reach that the matrons of greatest holiness of life, and most withdrawn from the world, felt that it was inexpedient for them to be deprived of conversing with a man of such esteem, and they sought to communicate with him. They vied with one another to tender their appreciation of him. Among these were not only ladies of wealth and position but of great learning. These latter endeavoured, with saintly emulation, to approach him, and were followed by those of the highest rank, until they overcame the bashfulness and retirement of the monk, for his religious life he never lost sight of on any occasion whatsoever, but followed it in Rome in view of the whole world when all eyes were bent upon him. The holy Pontiff Damasus was overjoyed on beholding this homage, and all the praise lavished on his Jerome from every quarter, and the wisdom which emanated from his lips. It seemed to him that he had greatly aggrieved the Church by not sooner having brought forward such a mind for her service. In truth, the friendship, which by means of Epiphanius and Paulinus had been established with Jerome, added to the services they had rendered him, was largely instrumental in securing the satisfactory issue of these prelates' journey. Paulinus returned confirmed in his bishopric, gratefully and in subjection to the holy See. Epiphanius quickly despatched his affairs, and the Pope gave orders for him to return to

his churches, he himself continuing with his new guest. Damasus clearly perceived that God had brought to him a great man, like to another Paul or Peter, in order that, at a time of so much business with heretics, as well as with the Catholics themselves, he, in union with the Emperor and princes, should assist him. Acting, therefore, under this impression, Damasus entrusted him with the gravest business of his office, namely, the replying to all doubts, questions, difficulties, and controversies respecting the faith, which should be sent for solution from all parts of the world to the apostolic See, as well as all others respecting good customs and appertaining to holy ceremonies. Also was Jerome delegated to give court, audience, and sentence on all difficulties and suits which might arise in the synods and provincial and national councils.

As at that period great was the variety of nations in which the Church of Christ had been scattered, and many were the errors that daily were springing up sown by the enemy in that celestial inheritance; many the novelties introduced by men ambitious of making known their name by good or evil means, and also because to men of saintly life God had revealed things for the better adornment of His Church and her discipline, as well as for the explanation of the sacred Scriptures and the clearing up of certain points of the Catholic faith as were discussed in the synods; from all which followed various contradictions and opinions, these as a consequence had to be submitted at once to Rome for solution and sentence. All these duties did the Pontiff impose on the saintly doctor, since all that he had to reply was to be replied by Jerome, and this was done by impressing on these replies his authority, confirming and authorising with apostolic power; thus all that passed by the judgment of Jerome was a sufficient

act, and all that would be required, as though the decision had been approved by a full consistory of cardinals. For thus did it appear to Damasus, that a man of so much learning and signal sanctity, endowed with so vast a zeal for the honour and service of our Lord, and for the increase of the Catholic faith, was equal in sound judgment to many; he being, so to say, a temple in himself wherein dwelt the Holy Ghost, Who would by his mouth give forth divine oracles and answers, as in former times the vessel of election, companion in the apostleship of St. Peter, had done.

All this is meant and comprehended in those brief words: "Reply for Damasus in the ecclesiastical letters"; and this is what is meant when he states that it was laid on him to reply to the synodal consultations that from the east and the west were forwarded to Pope Damasus, which was to say, from all the Church; because in these two words the whole was comprehended, according to the language employed in those early days, similarly as St. Paul used to say "*Jews and Greeks*"[1] when he wished to signify the whole world.

Thus does the holy doctor manifest it when writing to Geruncia,[2] when in the course of the letter he says as follows: "*When living in Rome, now many years back, I was assisting Damasus, the bishop of that city, in the letters which were written for the government and establishment of the Churches, it having been entrusted to my charge to reply to the consultations of all the synodal councils of the east and of the west.*"

By this paragraph he clearly declares the office and charge laid upon him by Damasus, and that he was his only counsellor, and of his secret council to the whole cabinet and its adviser. The same is confirmed against

[1] Romans. [2] *Epist.* 11.

the malice and calumny, or rather false testimony, Rufinus accuses him of, although disguising his name. The case was this. As he had been entrusted and charged with the great work of giving the rules and drawing up the resolutions in respect to what the heretics were to confess and do, when submitting and coming to be reconciled with the Church by subjecting themselves to the chair of St. Peter (this being in course of discussion by some of the Apollinarist heretics), Damasus summoned for this effect a synod in Rome, as mentioned by Haymo in lib. x. of his *Memorials of Christian Things*, and Theodoretus in lib. v. of his *History*, cap. ix.

When the rule for the confession of faith which the Apollinarists were to make had been drawn up, which said rule had been arranged by our saint, as was his office to do, it was perceived he had put in a word that he judged opportune to be set in the confession of faith respecting the incarnation of our Redeemer, calling Him *Homo Dominicus*. The Apollinarists were scandalised at this term, and reprobated the novelty of this manner of speech. Our saintly doctor being present at the time, proved to them that many learned and saintly doctors had employed the term, and that they had no cause to reprehend him or call it a new thing, and ordered the works of St. Athanasius to be brought before him, and showed them that he employed the same manner of speech and self-same word which they had objected to. They cunningly besought him to lend the volume in order to peruse it, and confute others with it, if perchance they should judge it wrong. He gave up the volume without suspecting the malice they had at heart. When the book was returned he found that the portion referred to had been scratched out, in order that no authority of St. Athanasius should be found for the two words *Homo Dominicus*. Over the portion

scratched out they had again written the said words, so that when the text should be again sought for they should be able to allege that this had been added on by Jerome, not by St. Athanasius. Once, being at supper, St. Jerome recounted the episode to his friend Rufinus. From this Rufinus took occasion to show that in the book of Origen the heretics had introduced many things, or he had done so, and the books were falsified, a thing which had never passed Jerome's mind to do. This case is maliciously brought forward by Rufinus as a testimony and proof, accusing the saint and alleging that it would be cruel not to believe this to have been the fact in the books of Origen, where he had exercised much diligence in discovering the malice of the Apollinarists, and infers that if there are evils in the books of Origen and heresies, as Jerome says, that it was in this way that they were introduced. In order to come to this he commences with these words, which are to our purpose.[1] "Damasus, bishop, having to resolve and deliberate on the manner how to receive the Apollinarists, charged a priest, a great friend of his, a most learned man, to whom he had entrusted these affairs, to dictate and draw up the Confession of Faith which the Apollinarists were to subscribe to and sign." Then follows the above-said statement.

What has been said suffices for our purpose, and we shall continue our history. Therefore, returning to it, we find our saint in Rome, burthened with occupations and grave matters, set up in the pinnacle of high opinion and reputation, that, were it any one else but Jerome, he would assuredly have lost his head.

Meanwhile that he is thus occupied, it appertains to history, and even a principal part of it, to examine what

[1] Rufin. in *Fine Apol. pro Origen, ad Machar.*

may the dignity be in which he is placed, and in what consists the importance of his office. Whether it is equal to being a cardinal, whether he was in truth raised to that dignity, whether in those days there were cardinals, a question which is doubtful.

DISCOURSE THE SIXTH

St. Jerome a Cardinal. The antiquity of this Dignity is proved. Herein is declared the Name and Office.

It is a matter of no importance whatever to saints, nor does it affect them in any way, to hold, or to be deprived of titles and dignities on which the world sets such regard. The aim of perfection depends on the virtues, principally charity and the love of God, and one's neighbour: let not this be lost to them, for as regard the rest they always avoid them. I have touched upon this in other places, yet it is of importance to repeat it often for the disillusion of many—that the dignities and offices of the Church are holy ministries and offices given and ordained by the Holy Ghost. For which reason is He invoked when men fill them, because they are his ministries which they exercise, although it is men who ordain them. These gifts do not make the holders saints, nor just men, nor friends of God, nor perfect men, in proof of which do we see many placed in high dignities who have God very far from them, and withdrawn from their hearts, and they only have from God the dignity they exercise. Let Judas be an example (so as not to quote others nearer our time) in apostolic dignity, elected by Christ Himself, yet who presently put Him up to barter, an ungrateful, wicked and disloyal man, and accepted the price of his perfidy, money which proved

his ruin. After him there have followed such a crowd, that even the very thought is enough to make one shudder and grieve the soul. What makes men saints and the friends of God, and sets man above the stars, is the spirit of sanctification, the planting of the divine gift in the soul, which St. James calls *perfect* and *excellent*, which carries in its train a great abundance of riches, distributed as it pleases Him and as He wills.

Of this gift of sanctification a great portion fell to our Doctor, as from the narrative we have already traced can be perceived of his life, and which God communicated to him in full; but from this point to which we have come, the fact will be more clearly and forcibly seen of the wonderful treasures of grace granted to him. "Open thy mouth and thou shalt be filled." Or, as in common parlance is expressed, that *his mouth was his measure*. And thus does it occur to such as follow the service of God in truth, and who cast themselves into it with determined hearts, confiding chivalrously in His bounty; as, for example, the labourers of the New Testament, who, without being equal, despite that in the last hour they went to labour in the vineyard, and even for this very reason were paid the first.

All things came to Jerome at the request of his mouth in these kinds of gifts; those others who are of the outside proceed by another way. And it is the will of God that dignities and ministries of the Church, forasmuch as they are holy, should be held by saintly ministers; and when he permits the reverse it is as a particular punishment. The saints are confirmed in them, and remain authoritatively apportioned to them, and their persons are esteemed on account of their dignities, and with them they win over souls when their lives correspond to their offices; and to the contrary, they lose all if each pulls his way

until there remains constructed a monster more strange than the chimera of the dialecticians and of the poets. Respect is lost to the dignity, and they are disdained and despised; the person is scorned, and all things are perverted.

It is clear that the Chair of the Supreme Pontificate claims respect, and men reverence it when they see it occupied by a St. Gregory and a Leo I., and hundreds of others of that kind; while, to the contrary, the dignity becomes lowered when filled by one who is a victim to his ambition, to his passions and low appetites. And if in this one position the truth of what is advanced is clearly verified, what must it be in the case of others of inferior grade? Hence, the dignity and office of Cardinal is no little enhanced and glorified, and with noble respect its authority established, through St. Jerome having been a Cardinal. The heretics, together with other evil-intentioned men, wished that in the affairs of the Church and its hierarchy there should be nothing found of importance, or any one holding office different from their own manner of life, in order that either by reason of their freedom in vice, or from their wish to dissolve the harmony of this mystical body, they should have a better entrance.[1] For this reason all heretics of that time and of later periods have affirmed that St. Jerome was not a Cardinal, and that the idea of Cardinals in the Church is a new invention, both in the office and in the name. Lastly, they hold it an absurdity to confer this dignity on the saint, and to depict him in its robes and insignias. Against these men, whether they be ignorant of ecclesiastical history or evil-minded towards it, I wish to prove, in the first place, the antiquity and age of the office and name of Cardinal to be more ancient than that of the time of St. Jerome;

[1] Calvin, *Carolus Moli. Eras. et alii.*

secondly, what the office of Cardinal meant in those days and what it is now; that St. Jerome was a Cardinal, and that it is no improper thing to depict him with the insignias of the said office. Many have treated this subject with great erudition, and this will be my reason for omitting many things which the subject would compel me to treat upon had it not been thoroughly discussed already. I will therefore confine myself to stating the chief points.

Some have gone so far as to assert that the office is as ancient as the time of Moses,[1] and equivalent to the position of the Seventy Elders who in the synagogue had assisted him in its government. And forasmuch as this Church was a continuation of the former one, so also has been continued the dignity and the office, although in the number there may exist a difference. Innocent III.[2] is of this opinion, and with him concurred Sixtus V., who ordained that the College of Cardinals should not exceed seventy-two. Other authors moderate this view, and say that they took the place of the apostles with Christ, for in the same way as they assisted Him, and He would reveal to them His secrets, expounding and declaring the prophesies to them, employing them in His ministry in many things, and even asked them questions and opinion, without it being at all necessary (in order to afford St. Peter a form or example to follow later on). Thus it was done, and hence the Prince of the Apostles introduced this rule. This was observed by St. Antoninus of Florence and others.[3] All this is true and substantial in good sense. But let us come to the fact without allegories or figures. In the Council of Rome, which was

[1] Deut. xxi.

[2] Innocent III., cap. Per Venerabilem. Cardinalis Paleotus in lib. *De Consist.*

[3] St. Antonin. 3, p. tit. 24. Turrecrem, lib. 1. *De Ecclesiast.* c. 8. August. de Ancon. q. 101.

convened by St. Silvester (should no other proof exist), in Canon 6, it is clearly stated that there were seven cardinal deacons in the Roman Church, and neither the title nor office was invented in that Council, for it was a thing established long before, as an ancient thing; and in this Council it is simply ordained that, besides three cardinal deacons of the Church of Rome, there should be other deacons appointed for the examination of the parishes. From this, then, let those be convinced who say that in the time of St. Jerome no such number of cardinals existed, as well as those who affirm that this name is not more ancient than from the time of St. Gregory, and that even then the bishops held this name, because as often as cardinals were named no mention was made of those of the Roman Church, but of others, hence it was no more to say cardinal priest than to say bishop. Both these statements are fallacies, and far removed from the truth, as will be apparent to any one. From the same Council, as regards the first, the contrary is proved, as we have seen, and with regard to St. Gregory, it is made manifest, in lib. v. letter 11 to Fortunatus, Bishop of Naples, where mention is made of the cardinal deacons, and in lib. xi. letter 34 mention is made of cardinal priests. John, deacon, in lib. iii. of the *Life of St. Gregory*, gives the number of bishops whom the saint consecrated cardinal priests. Polidorus Virgilius[1] says that this office and dignity had its commencement in St. Evaristus, a Greek, and his father, a native of Bethlehem, in the year 112 after the birth of our Lord, because he was the first who divided the offices, I mean the titles to the priests, and constituted, on the example of the apostles, seven deacons. Following Evaristus, later on Dionysius and Marcellus Popes imitated him, by enlarging on this; for thus does Damasus describe it, and

[1] Polid. *Vir.* lib. 4, cap. 9.

later on still, Platina. Others agree with Polidorus.[1] As to what he subsequently adds, that in the time of St. Jerome, although the office existed there was not that grand name attached to it of cardinal, he is greatly mistaken, as we have seen, because the name and the office come from undoubtedly farther back, and as we touched upon, the ministry of cardinals descends from the apostles, and the view of the authors who agree with Polidorus in the first is confirmed by a letter of St. Ignatius to the Italians wherein he says as follows: "What else is the priesthood but a holy institution of *conciliators* (*conciliarios*) and confessors of the bishops." Many know what Raphael Volaterranus[2] also tells us of some ancient tablets which he found in the Church of Arezzo, on which was inscribed a donation made by Zenobius, a Roman senator, to the Church itself in the time of Damasus, where occurs the following superscription and approbation: *Et Ego Joan, S. R. E. Diaconus Cardinalis ex parte Damasi Pontificis laudo et confirmo.*

Should we desire to carry this argument on to its end and investigate the origin of the word *cardinal*, it would not be easy to find the root and principle. Some, indeed nearly all, reduce it to the Greek term which means *cardia*, from whence was derived the Latin *cor*, which is the heart, because the heart is the seat and principle of life; this in truth is not at variance with the dignity and office of cardinals, since these are close to the principle and seat of the Church, from whence must come forth, through her council, the vital spirit which has to govern the whole of her body.

Let us proceed to examine what is the office and the points of its ministry. To my mind these points are three. First, what is common to bishops, priests, and deacons,

[1] Guido Archid. in Commen. in sextum Juris Pontific. Francis Zabarellus. Raymundus Rufus contra Molinum.

[2] Volat. lib. 22, *Antrop.*

because the one who is to be raised to the cardinalate must hold one of these three offices. Secondly, the right and charge of electing the supreme pontiff; and the third and chief office, and the one most difficult, is that of being of the conclave and council of the Pope, to give his opinion always whensoever it be necessary, and always to the advantage of the Church without any human respect, although by so doing he should lose his life. No one doubts that these three offices are of very ancient origin, and that they have come down in perpetual action from the apostles. But it is not a custom of very great antiquity, although now in use, for cardinals alone to make election of Popes, and for them alone to assist at the council and the general government of the Church. Forasmuch as in early times there were but few priests and deacons, all gathered together to the election who were summoned to the assemblies and councils. Nor was there any necessity to distinguish cardinals from those that were not cardinals, similarly as in the other Churches the canons were not distinguished from the non-canons.

From this in a brief manner is made manifest the antiquity, name, purpose, and office of cardinals, and that it dates far before the time of St. Jerome, and as a consequence is deduced from his own words what has been advanced that the saintly doctor had been cardinal priest of Rome. And the reason is manifest. A man who was so beloved by Damasus, and in whom he so fully trusted (indeed to whom he trusted everything), of whom the saint himself said that Damasus did nothing, nor said anything, but what he ordered, in the following words:[1] "*Damasus, of blessed memory, was nothing more than what I said.*" What less could he do than confer on him this dignity? A man upon whom all eyes in the city of Rome

[1] *Epist.* 99, *ad Asell.*

were turned, of whom it was publicly said that, after St. Damasus, he would succeed to the chair of the Supreme Pontiff, as one most worthy of it, for he himself was aware of this, since in the same epistle we find these words: "*All the votes and wishes of the city concurred in me, and by the judgment and approbation of all worthy of the supreme priesthood.*" What possible doubt could there exist that he had been created a cardinal? It is as clear as the sun. Moreover, in those days nearly always were the popes elected from among cardinals, and Damasus himself had been a cardinal, as is asserted by Onophrius. To Jerome alone had been entrusted to answer all doubts that arose in the synods or were sent to them for solution; he had been charged by the same Damasus to draw up the form and order of procedure which heretics who came to be reconciled were to follow, and what they were to confess and to abjure, and can it be called in question whether he was a cardinal? It is manifest that whatever offices cardinals were called upon to fulfil, he had held them all. That Jerome was a priest is proved, and it was no impediment that he had been ordained in Antioch to be priest of Rome, for Pope Damasus had need of such a man of importance to act for him juridically and with greater advantage to himself, a thing he could better do when invested with the dignity of cardinal, so that in the councils and assemblies his vote should carry authority, and this alone would be a sufficient reason. This dignity enabled him to be in the government of ecclesiastical affairs, and to be also the counsellor of the Pope (which is the proper office and ministry of cardinals), all this was verified in Jerome, for not only did he do this, similarly as other cardinals, but it, moreover, appears that he was alone, and had been invested with the whole charge, and, as it were, he was the pivot and hinge upon which all things

depended. That he was present at, and took part in, the election of the Pope I have clear evidence, since at the death of Damasus (for he died before Jerome left Rome) he voted in the election of Siricius, who was chosen at once, and to his vote must have been in great part due his election to the Chair. Hence he exercised all the offices, and in all that constitutes being a cardinal he was first.

There now remains the third point—the dress—the insignia of the purple in the robe and in the hat. To such as say that it is an absurdity to depict St. Jerome in them, we reply that it is ignorance to suppose that these are of recent introduction, and dates no farther back than the times of Benedict VIII. That these are new in regard to St. Jerome I acknowledge; but they are in error to ascribe them to the time of Benedict, since it stands proved by hundreds of authors that Innocent IV., about the year 1254, ordered in the Council of Lyons that cardinals should wear the *pileus* (red hat), which is the cap or hat which in Castilian is called *sombrero*, of red colour, and that they should ride palfrey horses. Thus is it related to us by Volaterranus,[1] Onophrius Genebrardus, Martin Polonius, and others. In doing this the Pope not only wished to confirm the dignity and distinguish it, but also to signify by it that should it be necessary to lay down life and limb and shed blood for the Church, by fighting for her, the office held by the cardinal would compel him to do so. That period of history was a time when this was not unusual, on account of the great persecution which the Emperor Frederick II. was waging on the Church. Subsequently, in the year 1464, Paul II., who was a Venetian (the last of whom Platina writes about, and from whom he experienced many trials), on account of having to appear in public ceremonials with much pomp and glory,

[1] Volat. lib. 22, *Onoph. in Pal. Genebr. in Cronet.*

and not wishing to seem as though he alone desired to distinguish himself, added much to the pageantry in the apparel of the cardinals. He first ordered, under heavy penalties, that none should wear the *red hat* or *scarlet* but the cardinals, and that the robes, apparel, and the trappings of the horses should be of the same colour; hence all this ornateness and colouring dates only from this epoch, which was a thousand years after St. Jerome, and therefore they say it is quite out of place to paint or depict him robed in all the insignia of a cardinal. I say that they would have reason for this objection if the licence of painters were a new thing and peculiar to this case, and were there not an infinite number of things of this kind accepted. Who doubts that cardinals, bishops, cardinal priests, and deacons had some robe or distinctive sign by which they were distinguished from the others, more especially when they exercised their offices in the Church? As for myself, I hold it as certain. But granted that, on account of the simplicity of the early times, they did not exist, at least when the numbers increased and the authority and dignity were established no one will deny that the dress existed. Let us admit that it was not so. How can we now depict them when all the dignities have their distinctive robes, such as lived in those remote ages (who no doubt were about the same), to such as only read with the eyes according to what they see in use in the churches? How can the masses to whom pictures are of great use know that St. Peter was pope, St. Stephen and St. Lawrence deacons, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine bishops, unless by depicting them according to their rank and in the emblems of their dignities? Forsooth, in the time of St. Peter were there tiaras and mitres such as he is depicted with now? Were there, perchance, in the time of St. Stephen dalmatics, albs, girdles, as we are shown; or even

in the time of St. Lawrence, less than 300 years later? Are they, forsooth, improperly depicted? That men who are heretics should question this because they are not pleased at any distinction of the Church, not even the pictures of the saints, I can understand, but the faithful have no reason for so doing. Hence, as St. Jerome in those early days filled the same office as is discharged in our days by cardinals, it is quite proper that he should be depicted clothed in the same robes, in order that all should understand the rank he held in the Church. From which also is seen how well established it was in all hearts that St. Jerome was a cardinal, since as soon as the Popes had portioned out their insignia to the cardinals he was vested in them, as is proved by the ancient pictures of the saint throughout the world.

Without any manner of doubt the insignia of the office fit him well, and none better; and despite the authors already quoted should not have afforded us another reason for cardinals being invested in *galerus*, *petesus*, or *capellus* of wide brim and of a red colour, but to signify that they had to lay down their life and limb for Jesus Christ and His Church; yet I believe there were many other considerations and motives for this insignia, which has already been made the device of cardinals, and in an especial manner of St. Jerome, for on seeing a *capellus* in an escutcheon men at once recognise it as his arms and device. In order to signify what has been said, any sort of red cap would suffice, but to make a hat of such extensive brim, straight and wide, which greatly resembles the wand (*caduceus*) of Mercury (supposed by the ancients to be the messenger of the gods), was not done without judgment and reflection. Without doubt it was the most skilled and significative device which could be given to cardinals with the object of signifying to them the obligations

of the office, and that they should read them in their hats.

The ancients supposed that Mercury was the messenger between the gods and men, and that he came and went with their messages, and arranged treaties of peace and gave advice. They put wings on his shoes, and in his hand a wand in which two serpents were twined, on his head the *galerus* of large lappets and two wings. Putting aside what profane writers may say concerning this, I will confine myself to what concerns our purpose, by saying that all this fits well to all prelates and all such as hold the office of mediators between God and men, and with greater advantages and propriety to the cardinals. These, like to such as have wings to their feet, are not to plant them on the ground: their affections must be well lifted up, their footsteps very swift for the things of heaven, because for the things of the world there is no need of wings; the force of gravity itself of the human heart presses down and bends towards earth. It is necessary that they should rise from earth with light wings, and say with the apostle (whom some have called Mercury),[1] "*Our conversation is in heaven.*" On the head is set the large *capellus*, because it is in the brain that reason has its seat, and it is meet that it should be well guarded and strengthened; because if this part be not in health the man is no longer man. The part that is most noble, called *mind*, *mente*, or *mens* (from whence some nations derive the name of man, calling him *mensch*, which means a thing which governs itself), must have the *capellus*, in order to comprehend that, on having this part guarded and safe, the whole man remains free of the ailments and the sicknesses which disturb the whole scheme of the due government of human life, and likewise also, that thereby they should be known as

[1] Actor.

being Mercuries between God and the rest of men, their office being to declare the divine will to mortals. Such should be the men upon whose head is placed the red hat, the token and insignia of peace, for without first knowing the divine will, and they themselves carrying it out by deeds, it is impossible they should attain to it. It is said that Mercury[1] would descend flying, and perch first on some high mountain, and from thence come down to men. Similarly does the royal Prophet sing, "*Let the mountains receive peace for the peoples.*" These are the high mountains of the Church, the cardinals and pastors, whereupon peace must first be planted, and a channel down which thousands of gifts are to descend from heaven, enclosed all within this peace. All to be effected at the cost of their blood and their life, since this is what is declared by the red hat. It would be simply superfluous to enlarge on how fittingly all this apparel suits our glorious doctor; and this is what it is to be a cardinal (for in truth it is nothing else), and I do not know whether there has lived any cardinal to equal him.[2]

Great and precious pearls, diamonds, and rubies has the Church possessed among her princes in this dignity, by which she has remained beautiful and robed in celestial apparel, because, despite that numerically they have not been many, yet it is a subject of marvel the greatness and multitude of renowned men who have come forth from that college: but few of these can equal St. Jerome; none surpass him, none with greater propriety can more fittingly wear the insignia—energetic in the cause of the Church and her defence, exponent of the divine will, a great counsellor, and now mediator between God and man.

[1] Virgil, 4 *Æneid.*

[2] Cardinalis Paleotus, lib. *De consuta Consib. com. ult memb.* 3.

BOOK THE FOURTH

FIFTH AGE—MANHOOD, VIRILITY

PROEM

In order to understand the excellence of this age, it suffices to see that man, when he arrives at the perfection of his being, is called by the name of man. Or if we wish to express it, as dialecticians say, "*à priori*," this state which constitutes the best of his manhood is called *virility*, from "*vir*." The Hebrew language, which is the mother of all languages, possesses four names by which in the sacred writings man is signified to us. The first is *Adam*, the second *Enó*, the third *Guibor*, the fourth *Is*; and all these names have a particular meaning, showing us some one thing in the state of man. The name Adam puts before us the matter from which he was formed, a *madder*-coloured earth, or *reddish*, and the word in Latin, "*homo*," from *humus*, is rightly well used, which answers to this, it means to say a "*thing of earth*." Holy Scripture always employs this word whenever it wishes to signify the state to which man degenerated after the sin, according to St. Paul: the first man was of earth, *earthly*; and in order to signify to us a thing opposed to God, according to that text of the Prophet, *Egypt*, *man* and not God. Of that happy first state in which God created man no particular term has remained to us. The second, which is Enó, is the same as in the vernacular, and what in Latin is termed *mortal*, signifies what is "*sickly, weak, fragile, miserable*"; thus we see the inheritance of Adam, its name, and the

first man. In this sense is found the term Enó, according to the words of Job: "War and fighting is the life of *Enó*, of the mortal man upon earth," and similarly in a number of other places. *Guibor* comes as the third name, and means "*strong, robust, powerful,* and *eminent,*" whether in *wealth, strength, ability, skill*; according to the Psalm, *Quique terrigenæ, et filii, hominum simul in unum dives et pauper*, thus calling ordinary people and men *terrigenæ*, and to the great and powerful *filii Guiborim.* The last name is *Is*, and by this is signified what is excellent and excelling in man, *virility*, as though we should say, the efficiency of all that be most perfect in him, and the same as is expressed in Latin by the word *vir*, and in Castilian by *varon.* Both terms in Latin and in Hebrew indicate all that is truly manly and masculine, in contradistinction to what is feminine. In order that we may well understand the divine letters, it is of no small importance for us to remember the distinction between these four names, which oftentimes, without distinction, is expressed by one only word, *man*, although the significations are so distinct, and as a consequence the sense is varied. Which interpretation never will be apprehended except by those who have had some knowledge of the holy language. Into this age of *Is*, that of manhood, did our doctor now enter. But yet he must have been well advanced in its perfection of manhood, because, according to our computation, when he came to Rome he must have entered the thirty-sixth or thirty-seventh year of his age, the full-grown age, wherein he will nobly manifest the fulness of his age by his fortitude, his constancy, his virtue, his excellence; for all these qualities are presupposed and enclosed in what we call manhood or virility.

Cicero says that from this name of *vir* is derived the name of "*virtue*," because it is what most beautifies and

elevates man. This term *virtue* in man comprehends all that there is of good and of greatness in man; it implies prudence, rectitude, temperance, fortitude, modesty, magnanimity, constancy, and integrity in all encounters and difficulties, and many other virtues.

Right well, indeed, will our saint at this age manifest to us all the above-said attributes, and even other more heroic and lofty virtues; grandly will he show his virility, and that he is truly of cardinal and venerable dignity. High dignities will not alter him, for, generally speaking, dignities reveal the man. So long as a man leads a retired, private life, he can easily dissimulate and hide his inclinations, his genius, or his habits; but when he comes forth to high position, his strength and his powers run a race with his desires and inclinations, and in that crucible is proved the refined gold.

It has been well said that dignities change a man and manifest what he is and his ways of life.[1] And of St. Jerome we may truly say more, viz., that the dignity manifested how great he was, and he himself illustrated how grand is the dignity, because it did not make him diminish a single point in his sanctity, in his rigorous penance and severity with himself; and he was in Rome as cardinal what he was in Syria as a monk; while he exemplified what was in truth the dignity of cardinal, to what noble virtues it obliges him who takes the dignity. *Virtue* and virility is signified by the growth of beard, in the common acceptation of all nations which are cultured; and though the beard grows in youth, it yet never attains perfection until manhood. Hence, for this reason, it is my belief that our Jerome is always depicted with a long beard, in order that we should understand that he never declined from his noble state of manhood and of virtue.

[1] Plutar. in *Vita Cicer.* Plutus, in *Præceptis civilibus de Epimacho.*

It is related of the cynic Diogenes that he never allowed his beard to be shorn, declaring that he wore it long in order to be ever reminded that he was a man, and that it was as unbecoming for a man to clip it as for a lion to have its mane shorn off. David would not permit his ambassadors to appear before him beardless who had been shaven by Ammon Ammonita, until their beards should have grown again; because, according to Eucherius, it signified (besides ignorance) that they had returned without virtue, without strength, and without valour. And thus does it happen to such as leave the path of virtue through some unworthy motive or deceit of the devil, that they degenerate from their former state of manliness, and render themselves unworthy of appearing in the presence of God. All this is far removed from Jerome; no encounter will make him fall, nor will he lose a single hair of his beard, despite all the warfare which the enemy may wage against him. We may safely place our greatest confidence in him, for never did he allow his beard to be shorn, nor was any one ever to take a part in despoiling him (since it is dangerous to attempt to clip a lion that is wide awake), and never will he be denied to enter the presence of God. Let us, then, in this fourth book of his life, and more leisurely, consider and reveal him as a grand man in the Church which he adorned so highly, and defended as a valorous, strong, and robust man, excelling all by his great skill.

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

St. Jerome establishes the Order of Divine Worship in Rome, and draws up the Holy Ceremonies of the Church. He prescribes the "Alleluia" to be sung in the Roman Liturgy.

Although St. Jerome had so much occupation in Rome fulfilling the offices of cardinal and chancellor, nevertheless he so thoroughly discharged the duties relating to his sacred priesthood and ministry that it would seem he had naught else to attend to. I do not wish in this discourse to treat of those duties which related to him as Doctor of the Church, but only of those labours which, as a good priest, he fulfilled, leaving aside all others for future discourses. It seems impossible that one man could have attended to so much, and have done so many things with such thoroughness. I believe it was because, as his food was scanty, his allotted time for sleep so short, he had time for what would appear no time could be enough. He said mass very frequently, and with all the devotion and fervour which can be imagined in so saintly a soul. Our Lord during these performances gave him great lights for all things, and favoured him with many graces and favours, as His Divine Majesty is wont to do on behalf of such like servants of His, who, fully aware of what they are called to do, prepare first their soul, most

earnestly awaiting the coming of so great a Bridegroom. And as the reverence for, and fear of, so much majesty absorbs their minds, turning their eyes to their own littleness and vileness, they empty themselves of all that they have within them, so that nothing should embarrass them, in order that such royal eyes be not offended and their capacity be not curtailed. Hence, when He enters these, He enriches them with His presence, and leaves them replete with His gifts. In this way do saints grow in grace; in this way are they made so great that, compared with them, the rest bear no proportion whatever; as the astrologers say that the earth bears no comparison with the heavens, similarly do these men of heaven bear an immeasurable advantage to worldly ones. This kept our saint in a continual guard in all things—custody of the eyes, great prudence and consideration in his words, his intercourse and conversation. He feared lest there should enter in by these windows, unless well guarded, what in the time of need would suffice to close the gates to the coming of God. Thus did he himself express it in the Epitaph of Marcella:[1] "*I proceeded with great modesty in my eyes, in order not to look on the Roman matrons.*"

It is a very difficult matter that the images of things seen which remain impressed in the soul, should not obstruct or intervene at the time when the priest needs to be gazing so closely upon Christ; and it is a great deceit and dangerous presumption to trust to one's self, and make so little account of God, as to think that He will establish in them His dwelling, and work the effects which from His corporeal presence is assumed, they themselves doing nothing on their part to warrant such a hope; for they have thought it of small moment that the

[1] *Epist.* 16.

dwelling should be well guarded and prepared for His coming, nor even when He is within (which is worse) do they linger a moment to thank Him for His coming, nor to ask of Him those mercies which they might have obtained by some of these efforts. And the truth of all this is apparent to many of us; for, after many years' enjoyment of these great benefits, we find ourselves buried in the deepest poverty. Nor can I persuade myself that so great a treasure, if it were within, could possibly remain so concealed that it should of itself afford so few or no proofs of its dwelling there. It is impossible that a bright fire, so many times multiplied, should not warm and shed its radiance on all objects around—that so brilliant a light should not diffuse a reflection, for this is its principal effect, and the sun itself does not wish to be obscured, but that it should be seen by its works and effects, and glory be given to the Father of the light which is in the heavens, and be declared, "This is the chaste generation which the Lord has blessed." This was seen in St. Jerome, who came forth from that sacred banquet "like a lion darting gleams of fire from his mouth" (for thus does St. Chrysostom declare of good communicants), turning for the divine honour, appalling to devils, unbearable to the bad.[1] In memory of this and as most precious relics and of great esteem does the city of Rome preserve the chalice in which St. Jerome consecrated, and it is shown to the people with great reverence, together with the chasuble which he wore. Perchance this may be the same chasuble which was sent to him by his great friend Nepotian, nephew of Heliodorus, when at the point of death, as a precious legacy in proof of his friendship. The saint himself says in the epitaph which he subsequently wrote upon him, and dedicated to the said uncle: "Tears are

[1] Marianus, in *Vita D. Hieronymi.*

coursing down my cheeks, and despite that I wish to resist them with the Spirit, I cannot disguise the sorrow I feel. Who would have thought that Nepotian, placed at the point of death, should have remembered my friendship? and that his soul, being in agony, should not have forgotten the sweetness of our desire? And taking the hand of his uncle, he said: 'This chasuble which I used in the holy ministry of the altar of Christ, send it to my beloved, in age my father, and in office my brother, and by all the affection that you bear to your nephew, pass it on to him whom you love on an equality with me.' Saying these words he swooned away, grasping the hand of his uncle and bearing me in his memory."[1] He was in an extreme manner tender towards his friends; and it seemed as friend after friend departed, that he himself expired with each, and their memory was always present with him. He was skilful in handling all things that were under his care and that appertained to the divine worship, keeping them all scrupulously clean. He considered that the church was the palace of the most exalted of kings, and the table that of the greatest of lords. He well knew the respect described in the Old Testament for the holy of holies, which was no more than the shadow of these present things, and he judged that all diligence was all too little. He could not endure those who on this point were careless and without decorum, and therefore to the contrary he experienced great delight when he found any one who excelled in these matters; he greatly admired this same priest Nepotian for this quality of circumspection and carefulness in his office.

In the same Epistle[2] he says a little above: "In comparison to what we have said little can I add; but in

[1] *Epist.* 3, c. 6, *ad Heliod.*
[2] *Epist.* 3, c. 5.

small things is made manifest the inclination and the spirit. Because in the same manner as we judge the Creator admirable, not only in the heavens and on the earth, in the sun and in the ocean, in the elephant, camel, horses, buffaloes, tigers, bears, and lions, so also in the smaller form of the animal kingdom—such as the ant, the fly, the caterpillar, and insects and grubs, which we know better by their forms than by their names, and examining each we are struck with admiration and reverence at the skill of the Great Artificer, so also does the soul that is truly dedicated to Christ, careful of what is great and what is small, because it knows that even of one idle word it will have to give an account. Therefore he was careful that the altar should be very clean, that there be no speck of dust on the walls, that the floor be well swept; the doorkeeper to assist at the doors and watch assiduously, that the tabernacle and sacristy be properly cleaned, the vessels thoroughly washed, and all the ceremonies performed with pious solicitude and diligence. He did not neglect either the greatest or the smallest office; and whenever you sought for him you would always find him in the church. The side chapels in the church, the sepulchres and altars of the martyrs, he would adorn with a variety of flowers, branches, the fresh green shoots of the vine, so that the whole was decorated with loving care and by the labour of his hands. I have inserted this here, not only because in itself it breathes all that is fresh, beautiful, and comely, and that we may see what was the care and pious inclination our saint had towards all these things (which in truth was my purpose), but that in passing we should consider how impious are those[1] who reprehend all they see in the church of holy ceremonies and ornamentation, saying that all these things are novelties and of little

[1] Feré omnes hæretici á Vigilantio usque ad impium Kemnicium.

fruit, whereas these have been in use from primitive ages, fostered and increased, and well established, and received, since the time of St. Jerome, down to the present time — even the smallest customs — a truth proved learnedly by those who have written treatises in defence of this truth against the monsters of these times. It is through St. Jerome being so particular and strict on the things appertaining to the Divine worship that it has resulted, as though by inheritance, that his Order and spiritual sons are distinguished by this same love of cleanliness and extreme care in the Divine service, and even so they consider themselves far behind what ought to be. It fosters devotion to witness the neatness and spotless cleanliness of the altars, sacristies, and temples of this Order; whilst it altogether destroys devotion to see the neglect of all these qualities in many places of worship, and in a matter where all care is insufficient, and it is a true inference what the interior life of the soul must be when the outside is thus neglected.

St. Jerome likewise set great diligence to improve and perfect the divine worship throughout the Roman Church, for which end he endeavoured to translate to her all the good usages and ceremonies which he had attentively observed in the Greek and oriental churches; and from an expression of his, it appears that the custom of holding lighted candles when the Gospel is chanted was introduced by him, for he says it was in use in the oriental church, but does not say it was in use in those of Rome, to which said use he gave a very lofty signification; and this custom, which has been brought down to our time, was no doubt his act. He had also observed that in the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and others the "*Alleluia*" was sung, and he therefore pleaded with the Pontiff

Damasus that it should likewise be sung in Rome. St. Gregory the Great, in the Seventh Book of his Epistles, in the Epistle 65 to John, Bishop of Zaragoza, in Sicily, replying to the objections of some who deemed the manner of celebrating mass incorrect, on coming to the "*Alleluia*," says: "The singing of the *Alleluia* is a custom taken from the church of Jerusalem, according to the tradition and teaching of St. Jerome, since the time of St. Damasus, Pope, for thus is it affirmed by all." By these words St. Gregory manifested the great authority in which St. Jerome was held, and of what great value was the tradition which he had taught, and which had been handed down to his time.

The reason which moved the holy doctor to introduce the chant of the "*Alleluia*" into the Latin Church was, I believe, not so much the desire that it should be similar to that of Jerusalem, where it had been taught by the Apostle St. James, and appears in his liturgy, nor that the Hebrew and Greek words should resound in the Roman, as on account of the lofty mystery which he was well aware was enclosed in those two terms, a Hebrew name and verb "*Allelu-ia*."

A great deal was revealed concerning this word when he wrote to the noble matron Marcella,[1] who had asked him what meaning there was in some of the Hebrew words, such as "*Alleluia*," "*Amen*," *Maranatha Ephod*. He tells her that *allelu-ia* is equal to *praise be to God*, because that last part, *ia*, is in Hebrew one of the ten divine names employed by those who speak the language. In another Epistle to the same,[2] he declares *Ia* to be interpreted by the name of *God*. And when expounding those words of Isaiah, chapter xxvi., *In Domino Deo forti in perpetuum*, says that in Hebrew there are three names of God, the first

[1] *Epist.* 137, *ad Marcel.* [2] *Epist.* 136, *ad Marcel.*

is *Ia*, the second *Jehovah*, the third *Zuria*. He says that the first part of *Allelu-ia* signifies *invisible*, the second *ineffable*, the third means *robust*. And in an Epistle, which is found among his works, written to Damasus, a very good reason is given, which, despite that the Epistle does not seem his, yet the argument is like to the saint's, that when we seek to praise God Incarnate with our voice, *Alleluia* is added to the Psalm; and forasmuch as our doctor [1] affords us so often occasion to declare his motives, it will not be foreign to this purpose to add here something concerning the mystery which is enclosed in the *Alleluia*. That name so intimate and celebrated with the Hebrews of *Jehovah*, which through mystery and excellence is called by them *Ineffable* and *nomen expositum*, and among the Greeks *tetragamaton*, that is to say, of *four letters*, is called by them *ineffable*, not because, as some have said, they think that by it God is called as He is in Himself, because God has no name nor is there a symbol in all that is created, to embrace or comprehend what is a greatness without limits.

It is true to say that all other names by which God is named He Himself has communicated to His creatures, angels and men; and that this one formed of the said four letters He has reserved for Himself; and this, not because it is so intimately His own, that it expresses what God is, but for other reasons. The simple reason of calling Himself *Ineffable* is because up to the present time it has not been written, nor can the manner of pronouncing it be properly written, nor is there a way in the divine letters, because the four with which it is written are not letters, which are pronounced singly among the Hebrews, but only by some differences of drawing the lips, to breathe in the air, and with the dots which were subse-

[1] *Apud Mar.* 9, t. in tertia serie.

quently added, to breathe out the same—a thing which few of those who know Hebrew recognise.

From the observance of the holy Scriptures is gathered that when this name is met with in them it signifies God as a nature of eternal substance and essence, constant, invariable, of a most firm mercifulness, and that what He promises of good and salutary (to which He is most inclined by will) cannot even be deficient, nor be hindered by any circumstance whatever. This is what the ineffable name of Jehovah expresses, which name, although we may so pronounce it, is not its proper sound. It becomes opportune to say this here, in order that we should understand that God gave this name to the children of Israel as a military countersign, a token or symbol, as a watchword among them by which they should be known, like the word given as a password to the armies in their watches, because as it had been promised to that people, and declared to them His will, a thing He never had done to other nations; whensoever they called upon God under that name, they always named Him the *God of the Promises*, and whereas others have spoken of this, I come to my purpose.

Of this name the two first letters are *i*, *a*, and stand the last in the said word *Alleluia*; and when in the divine letters the name *ia* is placed in the praises of God, it gives us to understand not only *God of the Promises* but God who has fulfilled them, and carried them to due effect and the desired point; and not as God who fulfilled them with a people and nation to whom had been given the name as a countersign, but as God and Lord so magnificent and generous in fulfilling what He promises, that He has extended them to the whole world, to all peoples, and to all nations, and to all dwelling in the heavens and on the earth, so that all should praise and laud Him, acknow-

ledge and glorify and adore Him. Hence, when in church is said *Alleluia*, it is with extreme brevity to declare *Praise the Lord*, which is His name, essence, and being. He Who promised His salvation and His treasures of good to one only nation, and brought them to a most happy fulfilment, and extending all these for the benefit of all men, and of all creatures that exist in heaven and on earth. And praising God and man, as said our saint, is nothing else but to laud the One Who, having promised to become man for the good of mankind, filled all things with His divine gifts, fulfilling with excess what He had promised.

In order that it be seen how clearly this is manifest in the sacred writings, let it be recognised in the first place, that it will not be found in all the Books of Moses, unless I have not examined them aright, that this name *Ia* is once even mentioned, yet in the Psalms it is inserted many times; this was as though to tell us that what had been given to the people by Moses, as regards what related to law and ceremony, was not what God had promised man, nor what He had intended to give them, nor would it stop here. It was no more than a shadow of the body and reality of what was promised. But in the Psalms, forasmuch as they are prophesies which sing of things as seen and executed, constant and eternal, the word *Ia* is repeated. Furthermore, let it be considered that when the name is set in the Psalms it always speaks to the multitude of nations and peoples, and not alone to the people of Israel. In the Psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes: laudate eum omnes populi*, it ends with *Allelu-ia*; because it contains naught else in the whole argument but what we have said. The same occurs in Psalm cii., after having said: *Scribantur hæc in generatione altera;* there is added *and the people that shall be created, Alleluia.* Observe also the Psalm cii., which

commences, *Laudate pueri Dominum*, where in the epilogue is said *He who maketh a barren woman to dwell in the house a joyful mother of children, Allelu-ia*, and in many more of its kind.

Hence, in view of the aforesaid, came truly from Heaven the inspiration and the motive our saint had for the Roman Church to sing what was so in keeping with herself, and from thence to spread throughout the world, as though from head to foot, the singing of this chant of joy, and not keep it enclosed solely in Jerusalem where the apostle had first ordered it should be sung. To that people and city was fulfilled the promise of God and man, and there the *Ineffable* fulfilled all that had been promised, His truth and intention complete in victory; thus was He there *Ia*, the God of the promises fulfilled. And forasmuch as he came to His own house and heritage, as the great theologian says, and His own did not receive Him but one here and there, as though in vestiges, He passed on to communicate such great benefits to all the nations, who, on receiving Him were made sons of God, new Israelites, nay, out of stones sons of Abraham; *for such as adored stocks and stones made themselves inferior to those very stones.* Thus was Jerusalem extended, and its walls, according to the petition of David in Psalm l. in his penitence, should be built up in order that such a great multitude should enter in and sing the *Allelu-ia.* When St. Jerome persuaded Pope Damasus to have this new voice heard in Rome, and that it be thus sung in the Hebrew language, these and other greater secrets which we have not attained did he reveal, because for the saintly pontiff to order so extraordinary a thing (which no doubt must have caused some alteration), great secrets must he have necessarily disclosed to him. It is seen that even in the time of the Holy Father Gregory I. this affair had not

been so well received or established in all parts, through ignorance of the mystery which it enclosed within. All were not so careful as Damasus; they did not all heed or care to comprehend the divine mysteries. We have need always to lament this negligence; and even at the present day, at this period when so much light has been thrown over these things, there is smaller pleasure among the many in turning our eyes to study and investigation than the bats and owls have in turning their eyes to the rays of the sun. But let us end here this discourse which would be lengthened to a great extent if we ventured to make it equal to the one which follows and similar to the foregone.

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

St. Jerome prescribes the Offices of the Church, the formulary of the Prayers, and the Rite of Holy Mass

THERE is a doubt when and where St. Jerome performed these pious labours, of which we are about to treat. I state this in regard to ordering the *Alleluia* to be sung in the Church, and the rest which forms the subjects of this discourse.

I think there can be no difficulty in the belief that the glorious Pope St. Damasus had died ere his saintly friend departed from Rome, as we shall proceed farther on to prove. Therefore we must say one of two things, either that he undertook these works before his arrival in Rome when he quitted the wilderness, while staying alternately in Antioch, or in Bethlehem, or in Jerusalem, or in the solitudes of Palestine, at the earnest petition by letters of Damasus; or that during his sojourn in Rome, as we shall suppose, he occupied himself in these pious exercises during what leisure was left to him after his many other occupations had been discharged. As regards the first theory we have a fact which favours it, in the existence of a letter written by St. Damasus to St. Jerome with the doctor's reply attached, in which the pontiff desires him to undertake these great works and other affairs, and Jerome's promise to put into execution what he

was entrusted with. These letters are to be found among the works of our holy doctor in the first volume of the *Councils* now more recently collected together, and are also corroborated by many grave authors as being genuine.[1] Others again there are who will not admit them to be genuine, but strike them out as false and frauds. The style of the letters they maintain is a great argument, since they are far from the style of learned men, and despite that this argument carries much weight, yet it is not sufficient to outweigh the authority of so many clever men and to frustrate the general belief which holds true the tradition that this was their work. That this communication, however, passed between Jerome and Damasus by letter is certain, and it has been confirmed in earlier ages by common consent and handed down by unbroken tradition among lettered men.

Whether these letters be true ones or not it is certain that St. Jerome, with the authority of Damasus, was most earnest in the adornment and care of the Church, whether when in Syria or when in Rome, or by correspondence and letters in carrying out what he had promised. Much in this respect is due to the piety and zeal of the holy pontiff, who as one vigilant and zealous for all appertaining to the Church, did not lose any opportunity, and who was also one who appreciated the talent of Jerome, perceiving that in him had descended the spirit of a Bezaleel, and thus employed him to adorn and embellish many things necessary in this tabernacle which God had planted and not man. Damasus, considering with especial regard all that appertained to the divine worship, found many deficiencies in plan and harmony. The former holy pontiffs, preoccupied as they had been with the persecutions of idolaters, the work of erecting churches, the

[1] Erasmus in 4 vols. Marianus in 9 vols. Perl. Laurient. *Surium, et Alis.*

extirpation of heresies, the eradication of idolatry and other affairs requiring their immediate attention, had not had that peace and quietude in which to treat of other matters, zealous as they had been respecting the order to be followed in the offices of the Church, but had each in their turn done what best seemed to him good, according to the time and opportunity. Beyond such things as had been agreed upon in the sacrifice of the altar since the time of the apostles, in all the essentials of the Sacrament, in the matter, in the form, in many parts, and the principal ones, of the sacred canon, the few details taught by St. Peter, St. James the Less, and other apostles were followed, forasmuch as they had seen them done by our Lord, or they themselves had used, or the pontiffs who had immediately succeeded the apostles had learned from them, as may be seen in the Liturgies which were printed by the diligence of Pamelius — in all else details were left to option. There was no harmony or order of epistles, gospels, or of introits; in a word, each one was free to use what he chose. The same was the case in the recital of the divine office. The Psalms were indeed recited, but without having a set formulary of lessons, the distribution of prayer and praises for Matins, and the rest of the holy hours being left to the individual choice. No regular form had been established, and the Church, which in all things is one, in this matter had not had the time nor the peace to establish and agree upon the plan to be followed, pursuing the doctrine left to the faithful by the apostles in general, exhorting one another to a holy life, with hymns and psalms, singing in their hearts spiritual canticles which later on were to be uttered by the mouth. In order to establish and arrange the method and plan of the divine liturgy, Pope Damasus besought Jerome to set in order the office of the Masses,

and draw up the formulary of the prayers to be used. For the different masses he was to assign the gospels and the epistles which were to be said or sung throughout the year, taking into account the feasts of our redemption, of the divine Saviour, and other mysteries of holy faith, then the order to be followed on the feasts of the apostles and martyrs, and lastly the arrangements of the Psalter and the order of reciting the canonical hours. In the aforesaid letter of Pope Damasus to our doctor he expresses himself in this wise: "I ask of your charity that, according to what you learned of your Rector Alexander, our bishop, you will send us the manner of chant used in the Greek Church when singing the holy Psalms, because, so great is our simplicity, that it is only when Sunday recurs that an epistle of the apostles is read, and a chapter from the gospels; and we have neither experience nor the manner of singing the Psalms, nor is the beauty of the hymns pronounced by our mouth."

The holy doctor did as he was bidden. He arranged the whole of the office of the Church; he disposed the Psalms according to the plan which at the present day is in general use in all churches, which on this point do not vary from the Roman. He divided the Psalter among the ordinary days of the week. He allotted some of the Psalms for the feasts of the apostles, martyrs, and virgins. He assigned some for lauds, others for vespers, and others again for the remaining hours of the day. He furthermore persuaded the holy Pontiff, and obtained his sanction, to add at the end of each psalm that celestial versicle of confession and praise of the most holy Trinity, "*Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto*," so that the faith of the holy Nicene Council, confessed and declared by the 318 Fathers, should resound always in the ears, and by the mouths, of the faithful! A favour truly vouchsafed from

Heaven, inspired into the heart of this great doctor and father of the Church, and worthy of everlasting praise; for, had nothing else remained to us in the Church of St. Jerome's labours, we should be under a very great obligation to him for this work alone. He also apportioned the lessons which were to be said at Matins throughout the year, gathering from the sacred books such passages as were most appropriate to the various times in such a manner, that the whole of the sacred Scriptures should be gone through during the year, and thus knowledge be obtained in the ordinary course of prayer. Later on he drew up the arrangement in conformity with the above, the gospels and epistles which were to be sung at Mass, on the various feasts in the course of the sacred cycle, touching upon the mystery of our redemption, setting their particular narratives; he also followed this plan in regard to feasts of certain saints, such as the apostles whose history is recorded in the sacred books, or such parts as appertained to the spirit and doctrines of each. All this was carried out with such method and harmony that it was clearly seen that he was divinely inspired and guided in this heavenly task. The epistles are full of a lofty art: they generally seem to be commentaries of the gospel selected; all is proportioned and to the point, whereby is seen the great knowledge that our holy doctor possessed of all the sacred books, and how well he penetrated divine secrets. In truth, I venture to say that for this work he had great assistance from the Holy Spirit, which directed his pen. Respecting the order and arrangement of the divine office, there was composed a book called *Comes*, or otherwise known as *Book of Lessons*. In proof of what has been stated, and of its antiquity, I will here state what Jacobus Pamelius, a very erudite and pious man, says in the

Prolegomena or Preambles which he wrote to the aforesaid book, and also what other grave authors declare. This work was printed anew after the reforms had been effected in the Missal and the Roman Breviary by Pius V. Thus does Pamelius speak in the Preface to the second volume: "Among the many other things which, at the desire and petition of St. Jerome, were ordained in the Church to be done by Pope Damasus of saintly memory, it is declared by such as have treated on the scheme of the order of the divine offices, was the arrangement of the lessons and the distribution of the gospels and epistles during the course of the year, this being due to St. Jerome. To prove this they quote frequently in their works the book called *Comes*, some adding the name of St. Jerome as the author, while others do so without giving the author's name. Putting aside, in the first place, the parts I have quoted in the volume of the Liturgies, and of Alcuin (who alleges oftentimes these lessons), Amalarius, in his book iii. cap. 40, says that in ancient missals and in the *Book of Lessons* there is found written, '*Hebdomada quinta ante Natalem Domini*,' and as many lessons in the *Book of Lessons* and equal number of gospels from the time reckoned to the Nativity." Farther on he adds: "The author of the *Book of Lessons* awakens our faith the more by representing to us the ages which preceded the coming of our Redeemer, symbolised by the weeks of Advent. He subsequently gives another reason for this in the lib. iv. Berno, Bishop of Augsburg, in the book of the Mass, treats upon two questions respecting the divergence existing between the *Book of Lessons* and the *Antiphonary*, or *Book of Antiphons* and book of the Sacraments.[1] The first question occurs in chapter iv.: 'Why does the author

[1] The two last books mentioned he attributes to St. Gregory Pope, and the first to St. Jerome.

of the *Offices of the Mass* set no more than four weeks (hebdomades) of Advent, whilst he who arranged the *Book of Lessons* places five?' The other question he treats upon in chapter vi.: 'Why did the author of the *Book of Offices* set twenty-three offices from the octave of Pentecost to Advent, whilst the author of the *Book of Lessons* sets twenty-five lessons, apart from the lessons and gospels which are read during the octave of Pentecost?' And with the Fifth Sunday before the Nativity of our Lord and that of the Most Holy Trinity, these, together with the twenty-five, make the number of twenty-seven. In chapter v. this same Bishop Berno treats on the concordance of these three books and of their titles, which for brevity's sake I omit. I will only confine myself to giving this testimony of his in regard to the authorship." Similarly he says: "As we believe that St. Gregory composed the book of the *Sacraments* and of the *Antiphons*, so also do we believe that St. Jerome composed the *Book of Lessons*, as is made manifest by the preface at the beginning of the book he calls *Comes*." Moreover, Micrologas, in the book *Observationes Ecclesiasticæ*, chapter xxv., states St. Jerome to be the author of *Comes* by the following words: "Also in the book *Comes* or *Book of Lessons*, which St. Jerome composed, in the fasts of Pentecost he gives the lessons which appertain to the feasts of the Holy Ghost." And in chapters xxviii. and xxx. he cites the lessons contained in the same book, where he also attributes the authorship of them to St. Jerome. The same does John Beleth, the theologian, allege in the *Rationale of the Divine Offices*, chapter lvii., where he says that St. Jerome, at the pleading of Pope Damasus, ordained that in all the churches should be read and followed what had been drawn up and arranged by St. Jerome for the seasons, drawn from the New and the Old Testament.

Lastly, for the confirmation of this statement, it becomes very important to note that the ancient Fathers made a remembrance of the lessons that are read from both the Testaments, publicly and in common, and that the successors of St. Damasus "make particular mention of the apostolic and evangelical lessons, as appears from what we saw in the first volume, as, for instance, such saints as St. Ambrose of Milan, St. Augustine of Africa, St. Leo the Great (Pope), St. Silvanius and St. Cesarius of France, while the three last use the translation of St. Jerome." All this is from Pamelius, in the above-quoted place of the second volume, where he purposely authorises the book called *Comes* or *Book of Lessons*, which begins from the vigil of the Nativity with the lessons of Isaias Prophet: "*Hæc dicit Dominus, propter Sion non tacebo*," etc. And the Epistle of St. Paul, "*Ad Romanos, Paulus servus Jesu Christi vocatus Apostolus.*" And the Gospel "*Secundum Matthæum*," "*Cum esset desponsata Mater Jesu Maria Joseph.*" And following all the feasts of the Lord, and the Sundays of the year, marking the stations of the churches of Rome, setting the feasts of the apostles and martyrs, comes Advent, beginning with the Fifth Sunday, reckoning up to the vigil of the Nativity, assigning gospels, epistles, and lessons for the fourth and sixth days of the week. On completing the course of the year he adds also the Rites for the Dedication of Churches, the Ceremonial for the Ordination of Deacons, Priests, and Bishops, and finally he gives the Office for the Dead, thus ending the *Book of Lessons*. From this is seen that the Missal and Breviary, which now, so divinely ordained, are in use, differ but little from venerable antiquity due to the arrangement of St. Jerome; a matter of great joy to the pious, who see how united the Church has always been, since even in this matter, where, the field

and liberty were so wide that she might have effected variety and change, she yet has not done so. Hence how much in the wrong are those, who understand so little, yet tell us that these things are of recent date; those who speak thus have not looked into the books of authors so ancient, grave, and learned and erudite, who received it as a thing established and worthy of the highest reverence. In the first volume the same Pamelius, treating on what the holy Pontiff St. Damasus had ordained in the Church, says as follows: "In the pontifical books, in the *Life of St. Damasus*, it is stated that he ordered the Psalms to be sung night and day throughout the Church. He ordered this to the bishops, the priests, and to the monasteries in nearly similar terms." Wilfridus Strabo says the same thing in his book *On the Offices of the Church*, in chapter xxv. Marianus Scotus, in the second volume of his History, expresses himself in these words: "Damasus, the twenty-eighth pope after St. Peter, ordained that in the whole Church there should be sung day and night the Psalms." This is confirmed by Venerable Bede, Haddo, and Usuardus in their "Martyrologies." Sigisbert in his *Chronicles* affirms the same thing.[1] All these authors allude to the words of that epistle which was quoted of our saint, which stands in the first volume of the *Councils of the Church*. This is confirmed, too, by *Albinus Flaccus* in his work *De Officiis Divinis*, where he says that the verse "*Gloria Patri et Filio*," etc., which words St. Jerome composed at the petition of Damasus, divides the Psalms from one another, because formerly they were sung consecutively without division. That, not satisfied with this verse, considering it too small a pause between psalm and psalm, the same sovereign Pontiff again asked him to separate it further, whereupon St. Jerome added the other verse, "*Sicut erat in*

[1] Sigisbert, *Cron.* anno 382.

principio et nunc et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen." Rudolphus Turgensis says that the verse "*Gloria Patri,*" etc., was composed by the Nicene Council, and that Pope Damasus ordered it to be sung at the end of each psalm. The same was said by Martinus Polonus in the year 370. Respecting the epistles and the gospels, Wilfridus Strabo, in the book already referred to, says thus: "It appears that in those times there were neither appointed nor read other lessons before the gospel but those from St. Paul; these were named only by the one who wrote the *Deeds of the Pontiffs* when he made a commemoration of the *Antiphons*, of which formerly they had none, and there was only read an epistle of the apostle, and the gospel, which statement is made by the pontiff Damasus, when writing to Jerome, in similar words."

Subsequently, after a careful examination of all points relating to this arrangement, there were set by Jerome other new lessons, not only taken from the New Testament, but even from the Old, according as the various feasts demanded. Rudolphus, in the aforesaid quotation, says that St. Jerome, cardinal priest, arranged and composed the order to be followed of the epistles and of the gospels, and this order is still adhered to at the present day in the Church, as is proved by the book called *Comes*. And writing to the Bishop Constantius, he says that Pope Damasus determined they should be thus read, as in use to this day. In order to manifest the antiquity and the genuineness of the book called *Comes*, which he was bringing forth to the light, and how ancient the originals were, he states in the Preface to the first volume as follows: "Of the *Comes*, or according to the moderns as it is now called, *Book of the Lessons of the most blessed Saint Jerome*, I declare that it was transcribed from the original which lies in the library and sacristy of our Cathedral Church

of Bruges, and subsequently both Hitorpus and myself compared it with some ancient originals of Cologne, among which there was one in the Metropolitan Church of Saint Peter, over eight hundred years old, as was proved by the Catalogue of the same library."

Further on Pamelius quotes other very ancient originals of some 600 years, by which is fully investigated the truth of the volume. The theologian John Beleth, in the aforesaid place quoted,[1] says: "The offices of the Church were arranged by the blessed Saint Jerome, at the request of Pope Damasus, and all that is read of the Old and New Testament in the Church. St. Gregory was an author, and he composed some of the chants, and Gelasius some hymns and other things, because in the time of Theodosius the Greater, the Psalms being said without any appointed order, he besought Pope Damasus to make it his care to have the office of the Church arranged, which thing Damasus effected by means of the Blessed Saint Jerome."

And in chapter xix. he further says: "We have said in the first place, speaking in a general way, that no one thing must be sung or read which be not approved by the supreme Pontiff. In the primitive Church each one sung what he pleased, so long as what was sung appertained to the divine praises. Some things were common and followed by all, either because taught by Christ, such as the *Lord's Prayer*, or by the apostles, as the *Creed*. Subsequently, when heresies and schisms sprang up in the Church and attacked her, the Emperor Theodosius, considering all things—for he himself had endeavoured to suppress and bring to naught the heresies of his time—conferred with Damasus the Pontiff, and besought him to summon some pious learned man to arrange and fix

[1] In rational. div. Office, cap. 57.

the divine offices, which thing Damasus did, entrusting this duty to St. Jerome, a man of great erudition and learning in the three principal languages, and as one whom he judged fully qualified to carry this out effectually, and thus set in order some at least of the offices of the Church. Jerome did so; and fixed as regards the Psalms, which, and how many, and on what days they should be sung; and the gospels and epistles and other offices, all which he arranged with much order. Thus from that time a particular office was defined for each day, and even many of the chants he composed; to which subsequently were added others by some of the doctors of the Church. When Pope Damasus examined the labours of St. Jerome, he commanded this arrangement to be kept and used in the Church." All this is what John Beleth says.

I shall conclude this subject, which appears well proved, with the authority of *Honorius of Augsburg* in his book of *Gemma Animæ*, and on the *Concordance* of the divine offices, where he says: "As anciently the divine office was said in the Church according as each one liked; but subsequently, when the crowd of heretics began to divide into a thousand sections the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ, and schismatics broke it up in their conventicles and assemblies, the Emperor Theodosius of glorious memory, earnestly and diligently strove that a Council should be convened in Constantinople, wherein all the heresies of that time were condemned, and he humbly asked the Synod to give orders as to the divine offices being fixed and arranged. This important affair Damasus, the Roman Pontiff, entrusted to Jerome, a priest, a most learned man in divine and human letters. The erudite doctor did this work when living in the small city of Bethlehem, where our Saviour was born. He

distributed the Psalms among the hours of the night and of the day with great prudence in the form which the Church sings them even to the present day. For the office of the Mass he assigned lessons and gospels, taking them from the Old and New Testament, according as he deemed convenient to the time and to the seasons, because the Roman Church, when she seeks the succour of the saints, forms processions and makes stations to the different churches. When Damasus received the plan of the divine offices so wisely composed by St. Jerome, he summoned the College, and ordained that it should be thus sung and recited throughout the Church. Subsequently, St. Gregory and Gelasius made the prayers and chants which were appropriate to the lessons and the gospels according to the aforesaid plan, and now practised by the Church during the celebration of the divine offices.

As regards the statement made by the two authors, John Beleth and Honorius, that St. Jerome composed this plan when in Bethlehem, and even when St. Paula was already dwelling there, it is clearly a mistake, because without doubt St. Damasus was already dead when Jerome and Paula lived in Bethlehem, as we shall show farther on very clearly from the very epistles of the saint himself. It might have been the case that, as I have already said, all this affair was carried through before he came to Rome, when dwelling in Bethlehem. I consider it far more probable that he did not do so, but that it was effected when in Rome, despite that upon this question these letters were written ; and I have a suspicion that the reason for being compelled to go to Rome by Imperial letters was the occasion of this affair.

It has been fully shown that our great doctor served the Church in all these things, and that through his diligence and holy labours the divine office is resplendent

with the beauty which we perceive at the present day. He introduced the song of *Alleluia!* the versicle *Gloria Patri et Filio*; the distinction of the ordinary week days by psalms; the epistles, the lessons, and the chant: all things of themselves so inspired by Heaven, that such as do not enjoy them here below will not enjoy them above: things which clearly manifest the great favours which the soul of the saint received from God, and moreover things which, without being in the company of angels, could not have been so well arranged.

And thus does John Cassian express himself in the second book of *Institution of Monks and Monasteries*, that this scheme of the work done by St. Jerome in arranging the divine offices was not a thing of human genius, but that it was communicated to him by means of the angels sent from heaven. And in truth this doctor speaks justly, forasmuch as there is something of majesty and glory, which lifts up the spirit of men so above themselves, renders them quite other men, that being filled with a supernatural spirit, they are raised above all human intercourse, and appear to be in another region, taken up from earth during the time they are celebrating the divine offices; and the angels do not disdain to mix themselves in this intercourse with men, and they come down with loving affection to the company of mortals. Oftentimes have the voices of these servants of God been heard mingling with ours, when, in the silent hours of the night, with joyful vigils and songs, at times glad, at others sad, they have awakened the Lord and Spouse of religious souls; and He, moved by such welcome sounds, communes and communicates Himself to these by gifts, and takes delight in those pure verses and canticles on earth better than in the dwellings of the heavens. Oh! thou Jerominite Order! with good reason dost thou take pride in

the divine office and love thy choirs! Thine do I call it, since it had its birth, so to say, in the house of thy Father, and it comes to thee, as to a daughter by inheritance, and in whatsoever day thou shouldst not follow this with the care which has been thine up to the present—do not ever again call thyself his daughter! Let the world style thee as it may, for we well know how deceived it ever is in assigning names to things. Let others spend the nights and the days in what may so please them; but thou, as is thy custom, holy mother, spend it in the divine praises: let them be found thus by the night, when the sun sets below the horizon and when it illumines those that are beneath our feet; and there also let it find thee when it comes forth in the morning! Thy inheritance is the choir and the song, the purity and cleanliness of the house of the Lord, the spotlessness and the adornment of His palaces on this earth! The same office will be thine to perform high up in the heavens, where no other occupation is known but that of singing the divine praises!

And in truth the choir is an angelic institution: it was not learned, as some appear to think,[1] from the vain pagans, who, placed in choirs and circles, as we now declare it, in a ring, sang and danced before the brutal and unclean altars of their abominable gods, holding each other's hands or singly, beseeching in their songs that their sacrifices be accepted which were offered to them. A more ancient and nobler foundation has the Church in her holy rites, and one that she learned from better masters. The prophet Isaias beheld the seraphs placed in choirs, how they sang with alternate voices: Holy! holy! to the Lord of armies, and celestial choirs.[2] *Coor*, in the language of the Scythians and Cimmerians, means *multitude*, who

[1] Scaligerus, *de Arte Poet.* lib. 1, cap. 49.
[2] Gorop, *Hermit.* lib. 77.

this treasure, in their deep gratefulness would meet together to celebrate the mysteries of the redemption of the world in the communication and breaking of the Bread, for with these words does St. Luke signify the Sacrament of the Eucharist. At the beginning the number was small and they were all together, they knew one another, all were perfect men, saintly, full of God. The Church grew, some few separated and went to dwell in various towns, some in Jerusalem, others in Antioch, others again in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus; some of these were of the highest holiness; others were still imperfect, for under these two heads does the apostle divide them. No longer could they be gathered together in one church, because poverty and the persecution of the Gentiles did not allow of large gatherings nor public ones. Secretly would they divide themselves as best they could, where there were many under divers names and titles—some were called of the band or brotherhood of John, others of Bartholomew, and so on. On meeting together in this way, either each day or when they could, the first thing they did was to confess themselves as unworthy of so much good, and to accuse themselves humbly and in common of their defects; then they rose up and sang some hymns as best they thought. After this, if any letter had been received by that congregation or brotherhood, from the apostle St. Paul, or from any of their princes, it was read carefully in public, and each received what duties were ordered, what doctrine or mystery explained, the counsels, the reprehensions conveyed in that epistle. After the reading of this letter, which was done slowly, all being seated, and listened to with deep attention, a portion of the gospel was read, either such portion as had been declared in the letter or that came to the purpose. This ended, they all made a profession of the faith, either by the creed which the

apostle had composed, or in the order which was most convenient. And whilst the offering of bread and wine was being prepared which was to be consecrated, the members of that meeting contributed their alms for the necessitous brothers and the poor generally, whether present or absent. After this they joined in prayer to God for the whole world, for the princes of the Church, men apostles, or apostolic; then for the heads of the Republics, whether Christian or idolaters, so that He should be pleased to enlighten them, and guide in good ways the affairs of their Republic and government: this formed the preface. Then were celebrated the holy mysteries of the redemption of the world, consecrating the bread and the wine into the body and blood of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, as He had left it ordained it should be done in His memory and as He had willed. Before communicating they said the Lord's Prayer, calling God *Father*, and asking for all the benefits which from His hand can come to us, and, in particular, that He should give them that divine Bread, figured in other times by the manna, so that they should feel within them the promised Sabbath. They then received the Holy Communion, and those divine souls beheld the heavenly treasures and the Sacrament—hidden throughout the ages—manifested to them. They beheld God in themselves, and themselves within Him, and they communicated themselves to Him and He to them. They saw themselves all made one in that mystic Body, in spirit and in truth. They were absorbed, full of God, as though inebriated with the divine sweetness, and that new wine, that is not poured into old leathern bottles, which savour of the first bad manufacture.

Such was the Mass in that golden age, these were the divine offices celebrated: all this is gathered from the narrative of the Acts and apostolic practices, and from

the Epistles of St. Paul, if with attention they be read and meditated upon. Some remains of this still exist, though in a very much lower grade, in the brotherhoods or confraternities that are scattered throughout the world, known under the name of St. John, of St. Peter, and of Our Lady, and other saints, the members meeting together in the churches under these invocations for Mass, sermons, and other spiritual works. Would that they did not meet at meals, so that they should not become so inflamed! This evil, and abuse, commenced very early indeed. We have nothing to wonder at that such things should occur in these our times, when even in the time of the apostles, the text of the Epistle to the Corinthians,[1] it was said in truth, "*Alius quidem esurit, alius autem ebrius est.*" "Perchance," he adds then, "have you not houses where you can eat and drink? or do you despise the Church of God?" They had not well comprehended the doctrine which the holy apostle had given concerning the Supper of the Lord, and they fell into this abuse; for had it been performed with that order which we have described, it would be all full of charity, and for that reason does he repeat in chapter xi. of the Epistle, and declares to them this most sacred mystery, in order that they should know what it means to meet together in the church and to communicate in one Spirit. He had also in chapter iii. of the same Epistle touched somewhat on this[2] when he accuses them of being men who were yet carnal; and he gives the reason, saying that there existed among them a rivalry and a question as to which (so to say) was of a higher confraternity and had been baptized by the better hand. Some would say: We are better, for we are of Paul; others: Because we who are of Cephas, who is the head, have the advantage. No,

[1] 1 Cor. xi.

[2] 1 Cor. iii.

indeed; but we who are of Apollo. All this was nothing more than the work of the enemy, who was sowing early harvests. In these gatherings and meetings, and other similar ones, began to be celebrated the divine offices simply and purely; and those masters, great as they were, began to teach and to enjoin the order of what in those times was permitted. And the apostle in chapter xv., after having instructed them in the essential, concluded by saying, "What is wanting, when I come to see you I will dispose, and order how it shall be done."

Of all these things the report had come down from hand to hand together with the tradition, and many things were proved in the writings of the learned men of those times who succeeded the apostles, particularly in the oriental churches. Our doctor took advantage of all this, hence he set in order all things for the use of the Church, and with such wisdom and doctrine that this order and plan was preserved and followed during the course of the ages down to the present and for all time.

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

St. Jerome translates the Holy Scriptures at the Petition of St. Damasus, with especial reference to the Psalms. The Translation of the Septuagint is here considered.

When the matter of the arrangement of the divine office was brought to a conclusion with such great care and skill, the holy Pontiff was filled with jubilation; and he forthwith ordained that this new arrangement should be used throughout the Church. In the Roman Church it was at once adopted in order to invest the same with authority. In that happy age all things appertaining to the external worship and ceremonial in the Latin Church began to assume force and lustre, the Greek Church having hitherto excelled the Latin in these matters, and the prelates so cleverly managed in a short time to work this out, that from this point the Latin Church had no need to be envious of any other. Inspired by God or charmed at the result, as well as urged by the existing necessity, the same pontiff besought the holy doctor to complete this sacred adorning and perfect the unity of the divine worship in the whole Church by undertaking the labour of amending the Psalter of David, since it was the part most in use by the faithful. This was sung, as it had ever been sung, according to the translation of the Septuagint. There existed great discordance in the ecclesiastical music, which greatly offended the ear because

some would recite it one way, others followed another plan, all due to the small care taken hitherto to adhere to that holy translation in its primitive entirety. This point is a very grave one—indeed, one of the gravest in this history; and in order that the case be understood once and for all, I will exert myself to treat upon it in a brief manner, commencing from its foundation, for it is not easy to shed any light upon a thing which is so obscure.

The sacred Scriptures—I mean what appertains to the Old Testament—were written by the act of the Holy Ghost, the ministers being many. The first and the principal was Moses, and after him the rest of the holy prophets. It was written in the language of Canaan, which language was subsequently called Hebrew, from the Hebrews or travellers (for thus does the word "Hebrews" signify), as will be stated in another part. The Scriptures for many years were confined to this language, without passing into another until the sons of Israel were freed from their captivity on their return to their own land of Canaan. Then the ancients and learned men among them perceived that the people and the classes generally, by reason of the long captivity lasting seventy years, had forgotten much of the mother tongue, and had acquired the Chaldaic, as one who had been unable to sing the canticle of the Lord in a strange land, and they agreed, as pious men and learned in their language, well grounded in the truth, to impart and instruct their sons and the rest of the people in the law and the sacred books. Yet they had further saintly considerations. The first, to enable all to participate in that great treasure of the Word of God, and with their own eyes see the light and not allege ignorance. Secondly, to assure the perpetuity of that said law by extending it to other tongues, so that others

should read it and learn much. Thirdly, remove the occasion of saying that they alone were raised up by their learning, and did not wish, in order to preserve their authority, that others should know what they did. For all these reasons they conferred upon and agreed to translate the law into the Chaldaic and the Syriac, both common languages which were in daily use and spoken by all.

The heroes of this undertaking, if we may believe Elias the Levite in his "*El Meoreth*," were three. Orchelos, who translated the law comprised in the five books of Moses. Jonathas, to whom fell the prophets, first and last, Joshua, Judges, and Kings, the four greater prophets and the twelve minor ones. Josephus, to this one were given the translation of the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Canticles, and the rest of the sacred books, which the Hebrews call *Cherubim* and the Greeks *Hagiographa*. This was the first translation of the holy Scriptures, and of such great authority among the Jews that, when they have any doubt, they resort to this edition to solve the said doubts, and remain so well satisfied with the question so lucidly explained as though God Himself had revealed it to them. And their conviction is good and in reason, because, together with their deep knowledge, they were learned in the law, and they themselves were held to be saints. This translation is more of a paraphrase and a free rendering than a translation. It was so done for the aforesaid reasons. They called it *Targum*, which is equal to *Exposition*. Those expounders lived in times previous to the coming of Christ, and for that reason less suspected. If in our days it were to be found as they had left it, without doubt it would be a great treasure to us. What at present has been brought out and stands as the body of the royal Bible, although it is the best and most polished (omitting a few foolish things which some malicious Talmudists had inserted), nevertheless, many

passages are untrustworthy; yet it is of great service, and as a paraphrase and exposition very good, without going further as regards authority, nor its having greater force than any other exposition might have of any ancient author. There is no certitude that the Syriac translation, which is in a language formed for the greater part of a mixture of the Chaldean and the Hebrew, despite that the characters and grammar differ considerably, was done by these same authors, for it is a question which has not been properly investigated up to the present day.

In what regards the New Testament, some affirm that it was translated by St. Mark the Evangelist—a thing which, however, appears difficult to believe unless with a declared authority. In this doubt I am strengthened by the fact that neither St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Theophilus, Epiphanius, our doctor St. Jerome, nor Theodoretus, nor indeed any others of the ancient Fathers, who have diligently treated on the affair concerning the translations, have made any mention of this, some of these having lived in Egypt and others in Syria, from which fact the suspicion has arisen in me that this translation is of a more recent date and subsequent to the times when the above-quoted authors existed. Nevertheless, it is my belief that the Gospel of St. Matthew and the Epistle of the apostle St. Paul to the Hebrews were both originally written in the language of Syria. This is proved with sufficient plausibility by some modern authors, and although many of the aforesaid Fathers[1] may say that both these portions were written in the Hebrew, there is no contradiction, because they speak of the common Hebrew of those times which actually was the Syriac tongue. This is proved by the testimonies of the

[1] Albertus Wid. in act. Guido Fabricius.

gospel, because where it says *Hebraice Autem Golgotha*, and other expressions of the same kind which St. Jerome noticed in the book of the Hebrew names, they are Syriac words and not native Hebrew ones. These were the first translations of the sacred Scriptures.

As to the Greek translations—in order to approach nearer our purpose—St. Clement of Alexandria, in the first of his "*Stromas*," says that previous to the time of the great Alexander there had been a translation made in Greek of the sacred books, but it is not known who was the author. It appears that this translation was known to Plato, Aristotle, and other philosophers, who made use of its doctrine in their writings. Would that they had derived greater advantage, and not bartered their dreams so dearly! And whereas there followed the famous translation of the Septuagint, this first one must necessarily have been of small authority as having been done by some private individual, was then gradually forgotten, and the edition so exhausted that not even a relic remains of it.

From this results that authors assign the first place to the seventy interpreters (it is of small importance to our purpose to dispute whether there were seventy-two). St. Irenæus[1] and St. Clement of Alexandria say that it was done at the petition of Ptolemy, son of Cagi, who sent to Eleazar, the high priest, to assign learned men to do the translation, because he had in his own library a copy of the sacred Scriptures. Aristæus in a history he wrote on this subject; and Josephus[2] in the 12th of his *Antiquities*; Philo in the second book of the *Life of Moses*; Tertullian[3] in the *Apologetic*; St. Athanasius in his *Synopsis*; St. Epiphanius in the work on *Weights and Measures*; and many others

[1] Lib. 3, c. 25, Irenæus.

[2] Joseph, *Ant.* lib. 12, c. 2.

[3] Tertul. *Apolog.* cap. 13.

after these, affirm that it was no other than Ptolemy, despite that the interval was so short between one and the other that the difference is of small account. St. Epiphanius says that it was in the seventh year of the latter, and from that date to the nativity of our Saviour there intervened 291 years. It was certainly an inspiration from Heaven that this translation should have been done so many years before, because, as Eusebius[1] says in the eighth book, *De præparatione evangelica*, had it been done after the coming of Jesus Christ, the Jews, through envy, might have concealed the truth, or have corrupted the meaning, or at the least it would have remained of scant fidelity. Some grave authors among the Latins have ventured to say, that the Seventy translated no farther than the five books of Moses. They make our holy doctor chief author of this statement, because in the book *on the Hebraic Questions*, and in the chapter v. of Ezechiel, and in ii. of Micheas, it appears he approves this, and confirms it with the authority of Aristæus in the book of this history, and with that of Josephus[2] in the quoted place; and Philo, in the place above-said, notes the same, while some moderns say that it is a common sentence of the Hebrews. This becomes a probability from the fact that the whole translation did not occupy more than seventy days, according as it is affirmed by Aristæus, and Josephus, and by St. Isidore[3] in his offices. Of this opinion is the author of the book *Sederholam-minor*,[4] and others. The contrary, however, is the opinion of the ancient fathers and doctors, from Justin Martyr in the Dialogue against Tryphon; St. Irenæus, lib. 11, cap. xxxv.; St. Clement of Alexandria; Epiphanius and Eusebius in the places quoted

[1] Euseb. 8 *De Præpar. Evangel.* cap. 1.
[2] Joseph. *Ant.* lib. 12, c. 2, et lib. 1, c. 1.
[3] Isidor. 1 off. c. 12.
[4] *Sederholam-minor.*

above.[1] The reason of this appears evident, for it is not possible that Ptolemy, when he collected together books from all the world for his library, should not have gathered the principal ones of the Hebrews, which were the Prophecies which they held in such reverence and as so sacred; the histories of their kings, and the noteworthy actions of their captains and judges. More especially, that Jesus Christ and His apostles used this translation when they quoted the Scriptures, and they had never had knowledge of any other translation in those times but that of the Septuagint.

To urge that in seventy-two days it was impossible to effect so large a work is a poor argument, because even so small a work as the Five Books in the same number of days would be a marvel, as were many other marvels which occurred in this translation, to translate so little in so long a time. Our holy doctor is also of this opinion; because, although in the passage quoted, which was on Micheas, he doubts that this translation should be the Septuagint, and quotes Josephus and other Hebrews, and in the preface of the Hebrew questions he says the same; yet he there speaks, if we read it attentively, of the opinion of others, and not his own, without affirmation, because in all his commentaries on the twelve Prophets (according as he declares against Rufinus) he uses it together with his own. His words are these: "Despite that learned men like Josephus and the Hebrews may say, that the seventy interpreters only translated the five books of Moses, yet I, following the authority of the ancients—Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen—say that they translated the whole of the Old Testament." And I think, that when Aristæus says that the Seventy translated

[1] Martinez, *Hypotypos*, lib. 1, c. 1., et hæretici judaizantes. Vide ix. tum, Senen. alt. capit. totius Biblioth. Euseb. *Cæsar*, lib. 8, cap. 1.

the books of the law, he did not understand by this only the *Pentateuch*, as the Jews do, but that under the books of the law he comprehended the whole of the Old Testament, because it takes the name from that first and principal part, in the same way as Christ, speaking through St. John in the chapters x. and xv., says that there was written in the law that which is found in the Psalms, *Odio habuerunt me gratis*, which is read in Psalm xv., and *Ego dixi: dii estis omnes*, which occurs in Psalm lxxxi., and in the same manner does St. Paul say in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, cap. xiv., that there was written in the law what occurs in Isaias. There is another very much disputed question, viz., whether these seventy-two interpreters were all gathered together, or apart each in his own chamber alone, or all in one chamber, or in twos and twos. In any way, it appears a great marvel. And it was wonderful indeed that so many men in so short a space of time as seventy-two days should come together and agree on such a long and difficult work, and that no great differences of opinion should have occurred, a fact so unusual in this kind of work and among men of deep learning, for the greater be the learning the greater the difficulty to maintain an opinion. In truth I hold it a greater miracle than, if apart, and each in his cell, they should have agreed to it. This question of the separate cells carries the authority and foundation of Justin Martyr[1] in the *Exhortation to the Gentiles*, where it says that he saw remains and vestiges of the little cells in Alexandria where the translation was made. Following Justin, and trusting to his authority, come St. Irenæus,[2] St. Cyril,[3] St. Clement of Alexandria,[4] St. Augustine,[5] in his *De Civitate*

[1] Justin. Mart. *Ora Exhort.*
[2] Irenæus, lib. 3, c. 25.
[3] Cyrilus, *Cateches.* 4.
[4] Clement, 1 *Stromat.*
[5] August. t. 8, *De civitate*, cap. 24; *De doctrina Christiana*, lib. 2, c. 15.

Dei, although in the second book of *De doctrina Christiana* he does not determine either one way or the other. Some moderns add Philo[1] in the lib. 2 of the *Life of Moses*, Tertullian[2] in his *Apologetics*, and St. John Chrysostom in the fifth homily on St. Matthew, yet these three authors do not say a word respecting the dwellings and cells, but only that all these authors agreed marvellously not only in the sense, but in the words. St. Epiphanius, in the work on *Weights and Measures*, says that they were enclosed two and two, and that by a miracle each one came forth with his translation complete of the whole sacred Scriptures, with the same words, in such sort that there remained clearly thirty-six translations.

The reason for this action of carefully separating them in divers dwellings, St. Irenæus tells us (and from which subsequently Eusebius drew his information)[3] was because Ptolemy wished to prove the truth of the translation, fearing lest the Jews should attempt some unfair act by concealing the secrets; but that subsequently when the interpretation was read before him, finding that the whole work was so conformable, God was glorified, making it manifest that the writing was divine, because from beginning to the end all their translations were expressed in the selfsame sentences and words throughout. Justin adds that this was known from the ancient histories to have been the fact, and that the king had employed great care that there should be no communication between one another during the time that the translation was being made; for which purpose he placed guards and overseers, besides keeping them apart.

All this is contradicted by our holy doctor, who calls this narrative a tale and a legend of old women, in the

[1] Philon. 2 *De Vita Moisis.* [2] Tertullian, in *Apologet.* cap. 19.
[3] Euseb. lib. 5, *Histor. Ecclesiast.* cap. 8.

Preface on the *Pentateuch* in these words: "I know not who was the inventor that with his lies built up the cells of Alexandria, in which the Seventy were placed thus divided and wrote the uniform translation, because neither Aristæus, who was of the guards of the said King Ptolemy, nor Josephus, who lived long after, remembered nor referred to any such thing; rather to the contrary, they say that they were gathered together in one apartment, and that those who were writing conferred upon what they wrote, and did not prophesy." With two such grave witnesses as were Aristæus, the historian of the act and actual witness of the deed, and Josephus, a man who was so jealous of the name and glory of his people, yet neither make a note of this, St. Jerome ventures to scorn the little cells. Subsequently Eusebius, although translating from St. Irenæus, in like manner did not deem it worth mentioning them, nor did they appear to him certain, in view that Aristæus is silent about them. Without doubt had Tertullian, Philo, and Chrysostom any trustworthy notice of them, they would not have remained silent, because they purposely treated on the subject. Moreover, despite that these said authors state that it was a great marvel in the interpreters to agree so perfectly in the translation on every point, nevertheless they make no mention of any such cells, for, as it has been well said, it was no less marvellous to arrange in so short a time the translation uniformly; hence it appears to St. Augustine, in the place quoted in his Christian doctrine, that, according to both opinions, this concord and uniformity was an admirable fact. This sentence of our doctor seems the safest and most reliable, and satisfies some of the moderns such as Titelman and others,[1] for though some with small foundation reply that the work of Aristæus which we now

[1] Titelman, in *Prolog. Apol. pro Vulgato.* Andreas Mapius, *Præfatio in Josue.*

have is a spurious one of the Rabbis, and not the true one, it matters little to the purpose, since we see and read in this one—such as it is—the same as is referred by Josephus, Tertullian, Eusebius, and our Jerome without a single deviation. And as regards what one of these moderns says,[1] who takes this very much to heart, so much so that he loses his head, that St. Epiphanius read Aristæus and cites him, and remarks upon the little cells—a thing he would not have done if he had seen them reprobated in Aristæus—is undoubtedly an argument about as strong as the genius of this author, who exercises himself but little in the rules of Dialectics, and knew few of those of scholastic theology, which in truth was necessary, in order, as he used to say, to challenge St. Jerome. Hence I say that if with this testimony of Epiphanius he still wishes to tell us that in his time Aristæus was uncorrupted and without falsehoods, and that subsequently these were added, or assumed, it is a thing without any truth, because Josephus and Eusebius were more ancient than Epiphanius, and they found no such cells in Aristæus. And if he further wishes to say that previous to Epiphanius the true Aristæus had not been found, and that they had come upon him there, I ask of the first how does he know this, and why does he qualify from hence the works of Aristæus, and make out some to be true and others false. Secondly, does he not perceive that St. Jerome dwelt for a long time with Epiphanius, with whom he often conferred, and they were very much attached to each other, Jerome being somewhat younger, and he says he read naught of this in Aristæus, rather he reprobates that about the cells, and therefore it brings nothing to this testimony; and it appears evident St. Epiphanius followed the reputation and

[1] Ludovicus Vives, cap. 42, lib. 18, *De Civitate*; Leo Castro, Præfat. in *Comment. Isai*, cap. 35.

word of Justin and Irenæus, and differs from them in not assigning more than thirty-six cells, since all the rest set down seventy-two or none at all.

From all this follows another question as to the authority and force of this translation, because some moderns wish to prove so much with all their genius that they were even prophets.[1] The chief reason is not a very good one, nor even safe, because the fountain whence it is taken is a small authority on this question of prophecy—it was Plato. He says in his *Timæus* that he was more worthy of the name of prophet, who could declare the prophecies, than the one who uttered the prophecy. He understood this as it sounds, and in particular to the purpose under discussion, since it is most false to say that if a prophecy is written in Hebrew or in Greek, and I should turn it into the vernacular or into Latin, that I am more of a prophet than he who prophesied it; for holding to its force what it is to prophesy in its proper sense, as must be taken in regard to the sacred books, we should have otherwise to call prophets an infinite number of translators and interpreters. He assumes to prove this by a great crowd of authorities of saints, very proper in regard to other purposes, as any one can see who has judgment; but, in effect, no one is found to have said they were prophets but this author who dreams it. St. Jerome, speaking (as he well knew it would be said) on this case, says they were not prophets but interpreters, as we observed in the place above quoted of the Preface on the *Pentateuch*, and the same thing does he declare on the Hebraic Questions, and in the little book *De Optimo genere Interpretandi*, and in the *Epistle to Sunia* and *Fratela.*

Despite the case to be so in regard to the power or

[1] Leon Castro, 4 lib. *Apologet. circa Medium.*

property of prophecy, there is no doubt they were not prophets, yet it cannot be denied they were divinely excellent interpreters, and had received a very particular gift of the Holy Ghost for translating; and from what we have said above it is proved, for they did not err in what they translated, but they in such a manner wrote down in the Greek language what God had said in the Hebrew, that they appeared to be rather prophets than interpreters, although in truth they were interpreters and not prophets. This verdict has been well received by the ancient writers, Aristæus, Philo, Josephus, as well as by the Fathers of the Church, Justin, Irenæus, Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, and the rest we have quoted from, and among them, as one who most approves of this view, is our saintly doctor, who, in the Preface on the *Paralipomenon*, says this almost in the first words: "Had the translation of the Septuagint continued in the purity and integrity with which it had been rendered into Greek, it would be a superfluous act, O Chromatius!—among bishops most holy and learned!—to induce me and constrain me to translate the Hebrew books into Latin; because what had been once sealed in their ears, and what had been created and confirmed by the faith of the Church in its principles, would be just what we should by our silence approve. But as in each region there are diverse copies, and that first pure, genuine translation has become so adulterated and corrupted, you have trusted to my judgment that I should decide which among all these is the one most true, or that I should make a new one of the old, and that as to the Jews who scoff at us, we should, as says the proverb, make them stare. Alexandria and Egypt praise with Hesychius the Septuagint. From Constantinople to Antioch the copies of the martyr *Lucianus* are lauded. As regards the provinces, which lie between these, their people all read the volumes of

Palestine which were published by Eusebius and Pamphilius from the works of Origen. The whole wonder is in these three diverse parts contending."

In the second Preface on this same book he also speaks to the same purpose in these words: "I tell you the truth freely and simply (he is addressing Damianus and Rogatianus), that in such a way is this book of names vitiated and untruthful in the Greek and Latin volumes, that it does not appear so much a Hebrew book as an aggregation of barbarous names from Sarmatia. Yet this must not be attributed to the seventy interpreters, for, full of the Holy Ghost, they translated faithfully, but to the act of the writers who, from the fair and amended copy, transcribed falsely. Oftentimes does it occur that out of three names they form one, removing from the centre some letters; at other times, on the contrary, out of one which appears overlong they form two or three."

From both these places it is seen that St. Jerome does not reprehend the translation of the Septuagint as their own, but as blotted out and amended by the fault of the copyists, and neither Jerome nor any other saint denies that the Spirit of God enlightened them. What they do deny, then, is what prophecy properly is. It was undoubtedly a miracle and a clear proof of the assistance of God that so great a work should have been concluded so expeditiously, with so much faithfulness and concord. Hence does Philo say in the book of the *Life of Moses* that every year a feast is held in the place where the translation was done in order to celebrate the memory of so great a marvel. This is the authority which may be given to the Septuagint, and their translation is undoubtedly worthy of great reverence. From this we can almost divine the reason and the occasion the holy Pontiff had for beseeching our saint to undertake correcting the

translation of the Psalms which were sung in the Church according to the version of the Septuagint, forasmuch as they were so badly set and far removed from the original integrity and faithfulness, that the books did not agree nor one church with the other. Some, in defence of this translation, allege that although deficient in some books, yet in others it was good; that what in some was wanting would be found to exist in the others; what in some was over and above, in others would be found removed and corrected. And I myself do not go against this; nevertheless it does not belie the truth of what has been said, that all this difference and variety of books were full of clear and manifest errors, from the fact of having introduced other translations in order to elucidate and correct them, and the stress that some churches followed the one and others followed another, that some were used in one part and others in another part; so many opinions existing, and the want of conformity in all, or most of them, both among the Greeks as in the Latins; all these considerations must have existed in the mind of the saintly Pontiff, and moved him justly and piously, and not without an especial impulse of the Holy Spirit—as the result demonstrated—to lay this undertaking upon St. Jerome. In obedience to so just and holy a request, as he himself tells us twice in the second book of the *Apologia against Rufinus*,[1] St. Jerome undertook the work, and he says that he left the Psalter very much amended, and was so received by the city of Rome. And, if I mistake not, he also says in the seventh chapter that he did the same in respect to the translation of the Septuagint. This first work on the Psalms, which was only a correction of the one done by the Seventy, but which had become so vitiated both in the Latin and in the Greek, is

[1] *Apolog. contra Rufin.* lib. 2, caps. 7 and 8.

called the *Roman Psalter*, and is the one that was used, and is still in use at the present day in the Church. Later on, independently of this one, he made another, because, owing to the judgment or the taste and opinion of such writers as would not give up the old errors, this version soon became corrupted in what had been amended. To this vitiation all books at that time were very much subjected, owing to all having to be done by the pen. This second emendation was made at the petition of Paula and Eustochium, but he did not call this an emendation of the first, but a new translation of the Psalms in the Greek of the Septuagint into Latin. To this one he set lines, or, as others say, stars and asterisks in order to show what was over and above that of the Septuagint, and which was not found in the Hebrew, and the stars to mark what he had put in anew in accordance with the Hebrew truth. This Psalter was very well received in France, and Pope Damasus gave permission, as *Sixtus of Sienna* mentions,[1] for it to be sung in all its churches, hence it was called the *Gallican Psalter*. Lastly, he effected a third work on the Psalms: he translated them from the selfsame Hebrew fountain into Latin, nearly word by word. We have no record that any use was made of this translation by the Church. In Spain it was used in the Church of Oran, and in some others until later times, when, with the reformed *Breviary*, these also adopted the Psalms which the whole Church sings. Of this translation we shall speak further on.

From what has been said, I deem that the disputed question among moderns respecting the truth and fulness of the translation of the Septuagint has been investigated, and whether it exists at the present day and whether there was one in the time of our saint. Notwithstanding

[1] Sixtus Senen. lib. 4, *Biblio. verb. Hieron.*

that some may wish to maintain that now and in those earlier times there existed one which is still in its entirety and a very good one, and others may declare that it was not so, nor that a trace of it has remained, yet it appears that a medium term may be the safer to adopt between these two opinions as being more trustworthy, namely, that then and at present it existed, and that there is a translation of the Septuagint, but so corrupted and altered that it seems to be another. That there may be one, and that there was one, is undoubted, since in clear proof of this truth there are many testimonies cited by the ancient Fathers and by the Evangelists which are read in the self-same form in the Greek texts. Furthermore, it seems impossible that a translation so grave and so holy, so ancient and so well received in the world, should have been lost altogether, and that another one should have been preserved. It also appears evident that both now and in those days it was much altered and amended, with many deficiencies and additions, and with many errors. This fact our own doctor clearly proves at every step, more especially in the Proem of the *Paralipomenon* and of Esdras. One reason acts very strongly in proof of this. Philo says, in the second book of the *Life of Moses*, that this translation was so close to the text and so exactly made that any one knowing the two languages would be struck with its faithfulness, each name replying to its name, verb with verb, which is what we call to interpret faithfully.[1] The same does Aristæus affirm, saying that the concordance between the Hebrew and the Greek was admirable; and at the end of the book which he wrote on this he says that, previous to the volumes being placed in the Royal Library, a diligent examination was made by learned men, and by them all

[1] Horatius, in *Arte Poet.*

was celebrated by acclamation the fidelity and holiness of the work, so much so that nothing was found either to withdraw or to add, on comparing the translation with the original Hebrew. At present we have two impressions of this translation, both made with great care and diligence. One of these is in the body of the Royal Bible, which, at the expense and by order of the Catholic King Philip II., was made in Antwerp regardless of cost or trouble—a work truly worthy of so great a prince. The translation of the Septuagint which it embodies was taken from divers ancient copies, without following any one as being proper and chief among them, but solely seeking in all of them what seemed best to fit in, at times supplying it from the Hebrew, and, lastly, having recourse always to this fountain in all places where it appeared less exact what was found in the original Greek. This translation I would not call of the Septuagint, but a new one made from this collection of many by the judgment and free choice of those who did it. Neither in the Royal Bible is there found, nor did those who laboured in it add or erase, a single point from what they found in the *Complutensian Bible*, which was printed by Cardinal Fray Francisco Jimenez, the Archbishop of Toledo, who, at an incredible cost, had copies brought in Greek and Hebrew from Rome and all parts of the world in such sort, that there is no difference in the Royal one but in the beauty of its characters, though not in the rendering of the Septuagint. Another translation from the Septuagint has been made in Rome subsequently by the authority of Sixtus V., the labour of it and the undertaking having been entrusted to Cardinal Antonio Caraffa, Librarian of the Vatican, a very learned and pious man. This was printed in Rome, in the first instance, in the Greek language in the year 1586; the chief text of the original which was

followed being that of the Vatican Library, which is proved to be over 1200 years old, and, as a consequence, before the time of Jerome, or at least not subsequent to him. Following this original there were others of Venice, Florence, and other parts. It represents much diligence, and undoubtedly was all that could be done in order to draw forth clearly that venerable work of antiquity, the holy translation, by which the Church was created and increased for many years, and it is quite reasonable to be held in great veneration. I believe that, without doubt, this is the one nearest to the one which in former times was called by the Greeks and the holy Fathers the *Common*, and the Latins, as well as by our holy father St. Jerome and others, the *Vulgate*, and that it was the one of the holy martyr *Lucian*, for which reason it was called *Luciana*. The Latin translation of this version was printed by the same Cardinal Caraffa in Rome, in the year 1588, endeavours having been made to adhere to the celebrated translation of St. Augustine which is styled the *Italian*, this one being the purest and most genuine of all those brought out at the time, and the one which most certainly our doctor amended, and the one that was commented upon by him, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, and other Fathers. These are the two translations of the Septuagint which we possess at the present day, and both these are very far removed from being a word-for-word translation of the Hebrew version, and so greatly praised by the ancient authors which existed between them, that there can be no doubt but that they differed greatly from that which the Seventy-two had made.

After this translation, which we call the first from the Hebrew into Greek, there followed many others, but not until many years had elapsed. Aquila of Sinope, in the time of the Emperor Adrian, made another, which is the second

from Hebrew into Greek. Subsequently there followed the one of Symmachus and Theodotian. Symmachus was a Samaritan in the time of Lucius Vero; Theodotian of Ephesus in the time of Commodus, a Marcionite heretic; the others were Judaizers. Later on there appeared two others, but without the authors' names, and were called fifth and sixth, because they held this place not only in the order of time, for one was in the time of Caracalla, and was found in Jericho, and the other in the time of Alexander Severus, and found in Nicopolis, but because in the *Hexaplon* and *Octaplon* of Origen they held that place. There was another of Lucianus, the martyr in the time of Diocletian and Maximin, and called the seventh, and, as I have already said, was of the Septuagint, rather more amended than the others, and which was called the *Vulgate* and *Common*. Of this one it is affirmed that some parts have been retained in the Vulgate, which now is the only and authentic one in the Church. The Psalms, as we have already said, as they were corrected by St. Jerome in Rome, the respective Books of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, the Epistle of Jeremias, which was called Baruch, Esther and Daniel, and some others which are not received as authentic, as are the last ones of Esdras. Other Greek translations there were of lesser account. Some say (to return to our purpose) that the Hebrew one is wrong and not the translation of the Septuagint, hence it is nothing wonderful that it should not be in accord with it.

These men do not perceive what they say, because even if the one of the Septuagint, which we now hold should be one and very exact, and not with so many variations as we have mentioned, even so, such an answer could not be allowed, because it is equal to saying that our Vulgate translation is erroneous, since it was translated from the

Hebrew one, which they say is itself erroneous, and with which it accords without comparison better than with the one of the Septuagint. Whosoever would desire further proofs of this let him read the words of our holy doctor in his Preface on the *Pentateuch*, and the long Epistle to Sunia and Fratela, the *Hebraic Questions*, and the book *De Optimo genere Interpretandi*, and the *Commentaries on the Prophets*. And he who would maintain that it is very safe, and was so, we can also tell him that he must likewise confess that Origen laboured in vain at its correction, together with Hesychius, Lucianus, and our saint. These learned and diligent doctors were not behindhand in solicitude to gather the various originals, for undoubtedly they resorted to and consulted all that in those times could be found, searching and conferring and comparing them with those of the whole world; nor do I know into what head or reason could it enter to imagine that at the present time we should have better originals than those which were available some 1200 years ago, and that now that should be pure and without vice which authors of such high judgment and great erudition in the knowledge of languages found and held to be vicious, and who laboured so hard to purify it and bring it forth clean, and were unable to do so.

From this is seen also the great absurdity of declaring that the Hebrew text, which is extant now, must needs be amended by the text of the Septuagint, as is affirmed by an obstinate modern,[1] who, on perceiving that the Hebrew text, of which he has had but scanty information, does not agree with his cold inartistic allegories, at once concludes that it is due to the falsification of the Jews. Whether the Hebrew text be wrong or vitiated, we shall see further on; at present it suffices to say that as a fact

[1] Leon Castro.

never has the Church determined anything on this subject, neither has she wished that a single point of the text be touched, and that the books which are distributed throughout nearly all the nations of the world be found with points or without, all are alike in a manner, following a singular and admirable conformity, and such as have seen them in Spain, France, Italy, Flanders, Germany, and in Africa, all affirm and testify to this fact. While I myself can give testimony of those which exist in this royal library of San Lorenzo, that although brought together from most varied provinces, in the original Hebrew texts of great antiquity all are found with divine uniformity and union; hence it would be a daring act without the authorisation of the Church to touch a thing so religiously preserved, trusting to his own wit and to no other translation. Furthermore we see that all those men who, from the time of our saintly doctor down to the present time, have had a knowledge of the holy language, have all found equally the text to possess this fulness and truth. Therefore let us ask: "Would it be well now to alter or corrupt it?"

No better occasion could be afforded the Jews in their hardness of heart, nor could it be disputed with them since the text and writing could not be brought to them by which they should be convinced which is the Hebrew one. Did not their malice and great blindness prevent it —they could be convinced, and the places and testimonies of Christ stand there as in its very fountain with all lucidity and unanswerable power. Nor do they deny this, for as regards this question they do not argue with us on the point, but whether what is there alleged against them of the truth of the Messias tallies with the life and deeds of Jesus Christ, and malice works with them so that they should not see the truth. All this would be without

force, and lost, if in a single point the ancient truthfulness of that text should be altered to them. One thing do I find here in the translation of the Septuagint, said of the saints, which I do not know how to explain, nor how it agrees with what we have brought forward. St. Epiphanius in his *Weights and Measures*, and our holy father in the prologue of the *Pentateuch*, and St. Augustine in the *City of God*,[1] all affirm that knowingly and of set purpose the Seventy interpreters left out certain things and added others, and others, again, they altered from what was in the fountain and original, and this, by the impulse of the Holy Ghost, so as not to manifest the divine secrets to the pagan people. I confess I do not know what to reply, because, if St. Jerome himself and the other saints praise and hold that translation to be so divine, that they affirm that were it now as faithful a translation as it was first made, there would be nothing further to be desired, nor need to labour in making another, how does he bewail the great changes and alterations found in the original? How does this agree with what we have shown above of the sentence of Philo and the self-same historian and witness of the fact, Aristæus, who both declare the accuracy and harmony to be divine, and that the examination was great which was made by learned men, and all acclaimed the religious fidelity found in the translation? How was it they did not see the faults, the additions, and the alterations? Moreover, there is a thing which confirms me in not believing this, that, if they kept silent or changed in order not to reveal the divine secrets in some places, how is it that others remained so clear and yet of greater importance? For certainly in respect to those that remained, such as were omitted and changed

[1] August. 18 Book, *De Civitate Dei*, caps. 43 and 44.

must have been very few, and not of equal power by far. This can only be replied to by saying that the saints piously sought some explanation to excuse the many deficiencies which were perceived in those times in the text of the Septuagint, for although they translated faithfully and religiously, yet by the action of time and the laxity of the copyists, that clear truth and purity became contaminated. Our doctor in the places quoted of the preface on the *Pentateuch* does not speak as his own verdict, but as the opinion of some Jews, who stated that the Seventy interpreters had concealed from King Ptolemy the mysteries of the Divinity and the plurality of the persons in order that it should not seem that they had departed from the sentence of Plato. It is not my office to point out in detail the errors and the differences of this translation. I only claim by this discourse to show the urgent occasion for the pious labours of this doctor, and the great service he thereby rendered our Holy mother the Church.

If any one would wish to enter further into the matter I would refer him to the various authors and books cited already, where he will find so many details that he will be amply satisfied. An author of our days[1] has had the hardihood to write an apologetic against those who have clung to the Hebrew text, calling them all *Judaisers* and enemies of the Church, without omitting to class our saint among them, forsooth, because they did not follow the allegories issued from the workshops of Philo and Origen, whence all the Greeks drew theirs. Moreover, he actually goes so far as to say that our saintly doctor retracted from what he had said against the Septuagint, if not with open words, as St. Augustine had done in order not to remove the authority of the

[1] Leon Castro, lib. 4, *Apol. ante Medium*, et in *Prolegomen.* caps. 8, 9, and 10.

translation, at least covertly and skilfully. Similarly did Rufinus act when he accused the same saintly doctor, bringing this accusation against him of having spoken in detriment of the Seventy reprobating them, and that afterwards he had retracted and abhorred the study he had made of the Hebrew tongue, and that the Hebrews had deceived him. All these falsehoods he gathered together, and made up a fictitious letter purporting to have been written by Jerome himself, in which he stated them. Let us now listen to what on this matter St. Jerome declares, so that in his own words we should reply to both these accusations. In the second book of the *Apologia* against Rufinus he says as follows:[1]—

"Brother Eusebius writes to me that he found in the possession of the Bishop of Africa a letter purporting to have been written by me, in which I did penance and retracted and affirmed that men had induced me when I was a young man to translate into Latin the Hebrew books, in all which there is no truth whatever. I was struck with horror on hearing this, and whereas truth is to be found in the mouths of two or three, and one only witness, although he should be Cato himself, would be no authority, some other brothers who were in the same city wrote to me, asking me with great insistence if this could be true, declaring, with tears in their eyes, who it was that had divulged this Epistle. If he could dare to act like this, what can there be he would not dare to do? Despite that malice has not such power as desire, yet doubtless innocence and virtue would perish were they to run equally with wickedness, and then power and malice would attain what they would. My style and the manner of saying things, such as it is, he knew not how to imitate, that most eloquent man, and he well manifests

[1] 2 lib. *Apol. contra Rufin.* cap. 7.

who he is in the midst of his falsehoods, despite he should disguise himself as the other person in whose character he had falsely arrayed himself. Thus it happens that he who counterfeited the Epistle under the name of my penance, I am also told reprehends me because my motive in interpreting the Holy Scriptures was none other than to condemn the Septuagint in such sort that, whether it be true what I have translated, or whether it be false, I cannot be free of crime, because I confess that in this my new work I have erred, or because the new translation does naught else but condemn the old one. I greatly marvel how in that Epistle he did not make me a homicide, an adulterer, sacrilegious and a parricide, and all else that turpitude could imagine and evolve within a mind. I feel constrained to thank him for this much, that, amid such a tangle of sins, he only accused me of the crimes of falsehood and of error."

After this he goes on to say how greatly he had always held in esteem the Seventy, how he studied and expounded their translations, making use of this work in all his writings in order to show that never did it enter his head to write or translate with the object of reprehending them; because, to the contrary, he held their words as very high and divine, and his own work as very low. He compares the former to the gold and the silk that were offered in the ancient tabernacle, and his own to the goat's hair and the hair cloth with which the tabernacle was covered; and that his aim was no other than to give the Latin Church and his own brethren the truth and the purity of the divine letters according as he found it in the fountain and in the truth of the Hebrew text—to reveal the sacraments of our faith; what things Christ and His apostles had written and taught, which things were neither found in the texts of the Septuagint nor in the others.

All this he proves with clear words and manifest examples. And in the prefaces on the *Paralipomenon* he says as follows: "The apostles and evangelists were well aware of, and well read in, the version of the Seventy interpreters. From whence did it come to them to declare so many things as we have cited which are not found in the Septuagint? And our Redeemer Jesus Christ, Author of both Testaments, in the gospel of St. John[1] says: '*He that believeth in me, as the scriptures say, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters.*' Undoubtedly what Christ said was written, must indeed have been written down. But where is it written? The Seventy for certain do not tell us, and the Church invests with no authority apocryphal things. Hence we must have recourse to the Hebrew books through which God spoke, and from which His disciples took the example. This I say with all reverence due to the ancients, for I only reply to those who attack me, and who reprehend me in public, whilst in secret they peruse my works, and those same constitute themselves both accusers and defenders. I call to mind that on one occasion I emended the translation of the Septuagint, and gave it to my Latin brethren from the Greek, and these will not make me say contrary to that which I always am declaring in my convent of friars." This same does he affirm in the Prologue on Esdras, when he challenges as witnesses to the truth of his translation all the Hebrews; and that, should they find it different from the translation of the Septuagint, not to speak ill of it rashly until they have tested the truth. Moreover, his own brethren have no reason to value his labours at so low a rate, since the Greeks have held them in so high esteem that, despite that they are themselves proud that we have the Scriptures from them, yet they

[1] St. John vii. 38.

surrender and acknowledge now that they even transcribe what he himself has translated from Hebrew into Latin, and from the Latin they pass it on to Greek. Again, he declares that he does this, not with the object of reprehending the Seventy, but in order that what in their text is obscure and false, or what through neglect of the copyists has become defective, should thereby remain pure, entire, and clear in his translation. He goes on to refer what he had said in the prologue on the Psalter to Sophronius, and declares again that he does not effect the translation in order to reprehend the Septuagint, but to convince the Jews, who might wish to argue, not to bring forward what they used to say to Sophronius; so that when they quoted the Scriptures from the translation of the Septuagint they would at once say, "It is not so in the Hebrew."

Likewise I wish to point out another bold allegation of this modern writer.[1] Against the common consent of all learned and pious men up to the present time, he wishes to say that the translation of the Psalms, as is found in the works of St. Jerome, which he made conformably with the truth of the Hebrew text (as the saint himself acknowledges he did), is really not his own, and this assertion he puts forward without giving any reason for this blind whim of his. Ever since the works of St. Jerome have been diffused throughout the world, these Psalms have been received as his work without contradiction whatever, and in truth they are worthy of the author; and, indeed, in those far remote times there was no one to attain to this. Returning to the aim of our purpose, which is to manifest that St. Jerome never swerved from the reverence in which he held the Seventy-two interpreters, but that his holy and pure intention was to give the Church the

[1] Leon Castro, *mille in locis apologet.*

truth of the sacred books, drawing it forth from the limpid fountain; and if in the translation of the Septuagint it is found otherwise, it is not any fault to discover what he found there; this he confirms later on in this same book against Rufinus[1] by the preface which he wrote upon Isaias. He goes on to say that the book of Daniel was so corrupted in the Septuagint that already in his time that translation was not read in the Church, but the one of Theodotian. He concludes at the end of this book with the example of many other things which in the Hebrew text were very different to the text of the Septuagint, as in the words of the 22nd Psalm:[2] *Deus meus, Deus meus, quare me dereliquisti?* And he says the Septuagint added *Respice in me*, and many other things in this way. He concludes with these words: "I do not say this to discredit the Seventy interpreters, but because the authority of Christ and of His apostles is greater; for where the translation of the Septuagint offers no discrepancy with the Hebrew original they allege their translation and employ it; and where it differs, or is wanting, they put in Greek what they had taken from the Hebrew. Let my adversary and accuser do similarly, and in the same way as I have shown that there are many things in the New Testament which are not in the Septuagint but exist in the Hebrew, so also let him show me passages in the New Testament of the Seventy interpreters which are not in the Hebrew text, and I will acknowledge myself at fault (and this is a very telling reason for the moderns of our times who so greatly uphold the Septuagint). From the whole of this discourse it remains proved that the translation of these ancients (which from the antiquity of its use is confirmed)

[1] *Contra Rufin.* cap. 9.

[2] This, Leon Castro passed over, although he set the title of the Psalm and the following verse.

is very useful in the Church, since by it the Gentiles heard that Christ was to come, before He came, and that not for that are all other interpreters to be reprobated, because they do not translate their own words but those that are in the divine books."

Up to this are the words of the saint. From this we shall understand his mind and the holy motives which he had in this undertaking, and the error of those who imagine that he retracted having said that the Septuagint was very vitiated and corrupted in his time, be the cause whatever it may. And it is also made manifest how foolish it is for men to say, that owing to this the Hebrew text should be emended and be printed with this correction, and then translate it word by word as Pagninus did, and others have sought to do, for this would be to translate not divine words, but human thoughts. Indeed through not understanding the thread and coherence of the sentence and text of the holy writing, they resorted to allegories and a mystical sense in order to escape from the difficulties in which they found themselves. We have considered the first work of our doctor in the translation and emendation of the Psalms, and what there is in the Greek translations, their number, antiquity, and authority, and what is the feeling of St. Jerome on this question.

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

Motives which urged St. Jerome to undertake the translation of the Scriptures into Latin from the Hebrew Text. The Truth and Fulness of the Text. Proofs are brought forward that the Vulgate Translation is St. Jerome's.

HAVING commenced the question of the translations made by the glorious St. Jerome from the Hebrew into Latin, and not wishing to have to revert to the same subject, we deem it better in this discourse to bring the matter to a conclusion.

The service rendered by our doctor to the Church by this labour was a very great one, and one for which we have the greatest gratitude to offer, because after the labours of the first princes of the Church, who were the apostles, there is nothing of higher esteem. In the former discourse we have presented some of the causes which must have urged him to carry out this work, but we merely touched upon them in passing, because we were proceeding forward with another aim, but in this discourse it will be useful to reveal them all here collectively from his own words. To me the strongest argument of all, and the one which satisfies me in the belief that there was wanting in Holy Church an edition of the Scriptures with all that fidelity and purity which was required, was to witness the great impulse of the Holy Spirit which was moving so strongly this doctor

to undertake so great a labour, so difficult a scheme, so arduous a task, without fear of contradiction, with a brave heart, ready to break lances with his adversaries and foil them all. And this is clearly seen to be the fact when we behold the Church putting aside what for so many years she had held, and with which she had been nourished and taught, that is to say, the version of the Septuagint, and all others of those times, which were many, and leaving them all aside, adopting the translation of one individual alone—that of a Jerome! And in such a manner did Holy Church continue to follow it all through the ages that the Holy Ghost made known to His spouse by the formal declaration in the Council of Trent, at which It assisted, that this one translation of St. Jerome should be held as authentic, the only one which with its testimonies should qualify holy dogmas and doctrines. The Church does not condemn the other translations, for they are of great profit and are, as it were, native commentaries, which discover the pregnancy and bring to light great conceptions; but she does not wish them to have that authority and that force with which she invested the one sprung from the hands of Jerome, the Vulgate, proved by the testimony of so many ages. Let us say that the first motive was the command of Pope Damasus who, as chief and head of the Church, ordered him to do so, because, acting under this principle of obedience, all goes in harmony, and that the motive of the Pontiff in beseeching Jerome was at the impulse and the assistance of the Holy Ghost in the interior sense; and in the exterior, the sight of the dissensions, variety, and dissonance which we have pointed out existed in the translation of the Septuagint, all of which could be remedied by Jerome bringing out a translation from the Hebrew original fount and truth.

It was from that source that the first translators had

drawn it, if by the action of time and its inevitable changes, which in truth alters and obliterates all things, it had not also obscured it. From that same original source will St. Jerome bring its truth forth to the world, because he will not approach that fount of Hebrew truth with any smaller vessel and spirit than they did to collect it. This reason did the doctor himself point out in the prologue of the *Paralipomenon* in the words already quoted above. "Were the translation of the Septuagint," he says, writing to Chromatius, "in the original purity in which they had left it, a superfluous thing it would be to ask me to make another translation." Then follows what he says in the prologue on Job. "Let those who bark at me," he says, "listen to the reason which moved me to translate this book. It was not the wish to reprehend the ancient translation of the Septuagint, but that the things which are in it obscure, or which were not said, or rather through the malice or deficiency of the copyists, became debased, should remain with our translation, clear and manifest." The third reason we touched upon already. The Jews used to jeer when the Catholics approached them, wishing to manifest to them their perfidy and blindness with the power of the Scriptures. They would bring out the Septuagint; they found a great want of harmony between the places quoted in the Greek and those which they knew well in their own text; and whereas the incorruptibility of their Scriptures was held so certain, they would take no notice of what was quoted to them, rather they scorned us, and by merely saying, "*that is not so in the Hebrew*," they silenced every one. We have touched on what occurred to Sophronius and the Jew, for which reason did he so urgently insist that our saint should make the translation of the Psalms from the Hebrew into Latin. At the end of the above prologue St. Jerome expresses himself in

this manner when writing to the same Sophronius. "It is one thing to sing the Psalms in Church with the faithful of Christ, and another to reply to the infidel Jews who wish to depreciate this Word."

Also, it is a deep consideration that whereas in the Latin Church exists the Head and the true Vicar of Christ, to which resort must be had for the pure and wholesome doctrine, and the perfect comprehension of the holy Scriptures, it is in reason that in the Latin Church there should in like manner be the divine letters used, which should be translated with the utmost fidelity from the original fount, without recourse being had for them to the Greek Church.

The Greek Church was unduly arrogant on that occasion, and even allowed herself to say that if there existed anything of good in the Western Church and in her doctors it had been taken and learned from her. All this became altered with the translation of our Jerome, and these lofty spirits were greatly humbled, translating the same holy Scriptures, on being convinced of its truth, from Latin into Greek, a thing they had never thought of doing. And if the times and the histories of that epoch are investigated we will find that ever since this translation of St. Jerome commenced to be used in the Church, the Latin doctors worked so advantageously that they surpassed the Greek ones, even as they themselves had formerly excelled the Latins.

We will touch upon this motive with the words of our holy doctor, where he says as follows upon Esdras: "How much more grateful should the Latins be to me, since they beheld that through my translation the arrogance of Greece has been humbled so far as to take already something from the Latin Church!" In the same prologue he adds another consideration and motive, which is of no

small weight. He says that at least his translation has this advantage—it saves great expense, and removes the occasion of many disputes and dissensions. First, because it were necessary, without it, to quote many volumes, gather together many translations and copies, which being all in manuscript at that epoch, were of great price and costly to obtain, the quotations having to be made only by much labour and a vast expenditure of wealth, not only as regards the translations of the Septuagint, but of many others by which the deficiences had been corrected, because no one trusted solely to them alone; and to do this would be needed those of Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotian, and the others already mentioned of Origen, Lucianus, and Hesychius, fifth, sixth, seventh, and hundreth, an undertaking of infinite expense, not only of wealth but of time and life. Furthermore, to collate and compare some copies with others, a thing which would be needed at every step, would involve endless labour. The second and worst of all, that after this cost and labour nought would come from it but an occasion for dissension and confusion; because the knowledge of the original Hebrew language being wanting, what judgment could be safely formed amid such a medley of Greek translations? The more the research, the more they would err; by multiplying translations they also multiplied dissensions. An example of this is afforded in the above-cited prologue to Esdras which the saint notices.[1] "Of a learned man of the Greeks, whom I suspect was Apollinaris, it is said that, although very erudite, yet through not knowing the Hebrew language, he oftentimes failed in following the meaning of the holy Scriptures, and proceeded to adopt the error of any interpreter, who came to hand. By this translation and pious undertaking, all these encounters and

[1] Præfatio in *Esdr. circa finem.*

dissensions would be obviated, which were constantly occurring in the House of the Lord, whose borders are peace. For despite that in the supposition of all agreeing to accept the version of the Septuagint, there would arise the difficulty of selecting one out of the variety which is found, now that it numbers some hundred versions. Because, as the saint said in the prologue of the *Paralipomenon*, Alexandria and the whole of Egypt laud the one of Hesychius, the priest of Jerusalem. Constantinople and all Asia Minor, as far as Antioch, read that translation which had been most emended, which one, as we have seen, is that of Lucianus Martyr, which version has also extended as far as Rome, and through the Latin Church, the seventh called the Vulgate and common one, of Lucianus, the priest of Antioch, and afterwards Bishop of Nicomedia; whilst Palestine and all that part between these extremes celebrated the one emended by Eusebius and Pamphylius, following the careful version of Origen. All this was obviated by the labour of St. Jerome.

And let it be as a conclusion and end of all these thoughts and reasons which moved him to break through the dilemma, and open a path to all Latins, for them to attempt the mastering of tongues, especially the Hebrew, which had been hitherto deemed inaccessible to them. He was the first of all we have any record of who vanquished this difficulty; after him came others, trusting so happy and saintly a guide, and at length the way of acquiring the Hebrew has been made so straight, so much so that none can be acquired with greater brevity, and the study of this language has flourished in the Roman Church to such a degree that an infinite number of things of great depth and importance in our faith have been cleared up and made known, a fact which the Greek

Church never attained to do. All this we owe to St. Jerome; all these are benefits obtained of him, and as his they are acknowledged by all learned men, who even hold him before their eyes as their patron and example. Our saint touched also on this motive in the *Apologia* against Rufinus in the above-cited place. On this account, and for all those other reasons the holy Pope Damasus and those who succeeded him, ordained that it should be read in the Latin Church, and that it should be received as a gift and a mercy sent from heaven, setting aside that of the Septuagint and all others of minor authority. And let it be observed that from the times of St. Augustine onwards no doctor has commented or written upon any other translation but that of St. Jerome, although at times they may have taken advantage of the others, but no more than as a help.

From this, unless I view it wrongly, remains determined in my opinion that question which many think of great account,[1] whether or not the text of the Hebrew became corrupted or erroneous through the malice of the Jews. Certainly those who affirm it do not view it in the right light, that it was falsified in times previous to those of our doctor St. Jerome, and in such sort that there remained no prophecy of Jesus Christ but which was dimmed by some falsity and error. I would ask them, If this be so, how or what kind of translation would St. Jerome bring out from it? The Vulgate translation, which the Church now uses, and has done so for so many ages back St. Jerome drew from the Hebrew; if that was tainted and corrupted it could not, without doubt, come out a clear version nor a true one; forsooth, a fine version of the holy Scriptures would the Church hold

[1] Leon Castro in *Apologet.* lib. 1, cap. 1, *et per totum opus*; Cano, *de locis*, lib. 2, cap. 13; Jacob. Christopolitanus, *præfatio in Salm.*

in the opinion of such men. St. Jerome, when writing on the 6th chapter of Isaias, says: "If any one should say that after the coming of Christ and the preaching of the apostles and publication of the gospels, the Hebrew books were falsified, let him hear Origen, who replies to this in the 8th volume upon Isaias." And the reply consists in this deep reason by which our doctor became convinced, and so will any one else be convinced. If the Hebrews falsified the writing and effected this before the coming of Christ or after—if before, why then did not Christ and the apostles reprehend them as falsifiers, and pointed them out as guilty of a grave crime, as they had reprehended others for what in comparison to this crime was much less grave? Had this been the case, our Lord would not have told them through St. John, *Search carefully the Scriptures, because they give testimony of Me*, rather He would have said, "*The Scriptures which spoke of Me you have corrupted, or you will do so later on.*"

Such as should desire to enter further into this subject of the disputes in regard to various translations may do well to read *Driedo*[1] in the second volume of his dogmas of the Church and of the Scriptures, and many other moderns who have taken up this question and made it their study, because as for my purpose, which was to make manifest the reasons for the pious labours of this glorious doctor, and what moved him to undertake them, I think I have said enough.

It is, however, necessary, in order to complete fully the aim of this discourse, to investigate what appertains to the history of the saint, whether the Vulgate translation which the Church holds, and has used so many years up to the present, is the same which St. Jerome made. Should

[1] Driedo, 2 *Dog. Eccles.* 3; Sixtus, *Senens.* ult. cap. *Bibl. Sancta*; Euseb. *Disputationes propriæ*; Joan. *Picus Miran. disp. propria.*

there be no further arguments of more convincing power to prove the truth of this statement than the one that by common consent, and as is said in public law-courts, the public voice and fame of the whole Church, it has been upheld and established in the hearts of the small and the great, in past times and in these, having been handed down from generation to generation, and from mouth to mouth, would suffice, and be an evident argument of sufficient strength. The defence of this part has been undertaken by some of the learned men of our time, and they have removed all, or nearly all, the labour from the shoulders of others by their erudition and deep study of history, and therefore I will do no more than briefly gather together what will suffice to me for this purpose; whosoever would wish to go into this in a more extended form may consult those works which are at hand.[1]

In order not to be disturbed by the opinions and the reasons of a few who hold that it is not Jerome's, we will proceed to consider it in parts.

It seems undoubted that the New Testament is a translation of his, and that at least it is the one he emended and corrected from the Greek text; and from his own writings it is gathered, because in all places which the holy doctor reprehends in the ancient translation, which was in use in his time, we find them corrected as he said they should be corrected. These are manifest, and there is no need to refer to them in detail; and modern writers who have treated on this subject repeat the same thing. The doctor, when speaking of his own writings in his book on the *Illustrious Men*, says that the New Testment was by him restored to its first and primitive sense, and that the Old Testament he had translated according to the Hebrew text. From this

[1] *Auctores supra citati.*

some[1] have argued that he did not make a translation, but an emendation, since he distinguishes between the Old and the New Testament, saying that the one was a translation and the other a restoration to its original entirety. And in the prologue to St. Damasus on the *Four Gospels* he says as follows: "You compel me to make a new translation of the Old Testament, and that after so many copies of the Scriptures are scattered throughout the world I should enter in as judge, and that whereas they are all in disagreement I should determine which, or what, is what best corresponds with the truth of the Greek text, a pious work, but a dangerous presumption to judge others by one who is to be judged by all."

Farther on he says: "The present little preface only promises the four gospels, the order of which is Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, emended, comparing them and collating them with the Greek books and with those of the ancients in order not to deviate much from the Latin version in use; and in such a manner do we temper and moderate them that on correcting the places in which the sense appeared altered, all else remained as it was." The same does he repeat on the canonical epistles in a prologue to the virgin Eustochium. "Many days ago," he says, "did we correct the gospels according to the truth of the Greek text." From these passages and testimonies it seems a more proper manner of speaking to say that he emended the New Testament rather than that he made a new translation. But in whichever sense we may take it we can well say that it is all his own, because what he took away was taken away, and what he judged right to take and read from the ancient, that remained and was read, and is read now.

That all this was ordered to be received throughout

[1] Pagnin. *Præfatio in Bibl. Paulus Sempronius*, lib. 2.

the Church by Pope Damasus, at whose petition Jerome had effected that version, and that it was accepted in its entirety, appears to be gathered from an epistle which St. Augustine wrote to St. Jerome,[1] where he says that his translation and emendation was collated with the Greek text when anything new occurred, and that it was found to be most faithfully done in the original Greek, so as to convince all. From this may be gathered that in those days the New Testament was already in the hands of all, under the title of the emended translation of St. Jerome, and it will be found that no author, whether ancient or modern, puts aside this translation or ignores it, nor that any other was received, and therefore as a consequence there is no reason for doubting that the New Testament of our Vulgate had any other author for its translation but St. Jerome.

Some say that there are passages found which are not corrected, as the saint said they should be. In the epistles to the Galatians and the Ephesians and to Titus there are passages where he says so. I reply that in the prologue of the gospels quoted above, written to Damasus, he confesses that he did not correct all he saw could be corrected, so that it should not appear that he altered many things, and be thought over particular; and it might be that when he was writing the commentaries on these same Epistles he might have deemed that it were well to alter them, yet subsequently, when viewing it in another light, he judged best to leave them as they were, and not effect so great a change from the ancient version. And it stands true that he wrote these commentaries before he made the translation of the New Testament, for he himself says so when speaking of his works and writings in the book on *Illustrious Men*. And now it is seen from these same passages

[1] August. *Epist.* 10.

that the Vulgate translation which he made is more in conformity to the Greek text than the one he wished to correct when commenting in regard to the translation of the Old Testament. We have already said that the Psalms are from the translation of the Septuagint, corrected by him carefully twice over, and not the translation he made into Latin, which is to be found among his works, nor the one he made from the Greek, according as it was in the originals of Origen. This is manifestly so from the Epistle to Sunia and Fratela, where he sets many verses which are expressed in a very different manner in the Septuagint from what he had emended; and that which is found in the Vulgate is the one he emended, and therefore is also called *Vulgate* and *Common*, as we proved above. Thus likewise it appears evident that the books of *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Machabees*, and others we have already referred to, are not his translation, but were those that remained from the ancient and common one. And this is proved because never did the saint mention having translated them, nor is there found any prologue upon them. And in an Epistle to St. Augustine[1] he affirms that to all the books he translated he made a prologue. He did not wish to work upon these because he did not hold them authentic, rather he reckoned them among the apocryphal ones, as is seen in the Prologue to the Galatians and the Prologue on Proverbs. St. Cyprian[2] and other saints quote many passages in these books with the same translation as we have now, and some of these were in times previous to St. Jerome; whence is seen that the ancient one remained without the saint approaching it. All the rest of the books of the Old Testament as it stands in the Vulgate are his translation from the Hebrew. This is

[1] *Epist.* 11, *Inter Epistolas* 8, *August.*
[2] Cyprian, *Lib. de Exhortation Martyrii.*

proved by many reasons. First and foremost, that St. Jerome was the first and only one among the ancients who translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Latin. This translation is clearly seen to have been from the Hebrew, with the exception of the books we have mentioned, and there is to all appearances no doubt that it was his. In all his prologues he complains of, and replies to, his adversaries who reprehend him for daring to undertake this work, since it had never been attempted by any Latin. From those remote ages we have no notice of any author, who, I do not say made a translation, but who even so much as knew the Hebrew language; and if this be not so, let our opponents tell us who he was. From some Epistles of St. Augustine,[1] and from his books of the *City of God*, this is proved. St. Isidore[2] says as much. Likewise St. Gregory, the Pope, allows it to be seen how it agrees with the Hebrew and how greatly it differs from the Greek, and it is clearly gathered that it did not come forth from this streamlet, but that it was collected from the fount. In the reckoning and manner of counting the years the same thing is found, because in the Greek it is very much in error, more especially in cap. v. in Genesis; while in our translation it corresponds well with the Hebrew text.

To those who love the truth, and are obedient to the Holy Church of Rome, the determination of the Holy Council of Trent is sufficient, for it bids us receive them as authentic, and as for the rebels, disobedient, and evil-minded, neither reason nor authority are of any avail, since all the virtues departed with their loss of faith, leaving them unbridled to say what is abhorrent to the pious and the single minded, and only fit for their own evil hearts. Many, as saintly as they were erudite, have replied to these

[1] August. *Epist.* 8 and 10, lib. 18, *De Civit.* cap. 43.
[2] Isidore, *Etymolog.* cap. 5.

opponents, and in order to remove all occasion to the evil-minded, two supreme pontiffs, Sixtus V. and Clement VIII., ordained, in fulfilment of the ordinances of the Holy Council, to have a Bible printed with the Vulgate translation, without the varied lessons, selecting (as it may be believed with great prudence) the most coherent and best received lessons. And in it will be found nothing but what is in harmony with the Christian religion and the doctrine taught by the Holy Roman Church, which she carries written not alone on parchments and paper, but engraved on the living tables of her heart by the very finger of God, which is His Holy Spirit.

Let this suffice which we have briefly stated, and we will proceed in the history of the saint's life, and consider when and on what occasions he translated the books of the holy Scriptures. He did not translate them all in Rome, nor was it possible that St. Damasus should have seen them all translated, nor even the greater portion of the books, as we shall clearly prove. The New Testament, the Psalms, and some others he may have seen done, as we have already stated.

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

St. Jerome translates the Sacred Scriptures into Slavonic. He arranges the Divine Office

At this point of our history it becomes opportune to consider another very pious and holy work which St. Jerome undertook in regard to the sacred Scriptures, and by so doing we will fulfil our promise of concluding the subject.

Some authors state that he also translated the holy books from the Hebrew into the Slavonic tongue, this being the common language spoken in his native place. I believe he undertook this labour and brought it to a conclusion whilst dwelling in Rome. This appears plausible, forasmuch as his own compatriots must have become aware that he had left the desert and had returned from Syria to the holy city, that he held a distinguished position, and was renowned for his sanctity and doctrine, since his fame had penetrated to every part; and it is quite in reason that they should have sought him out, wishing to converse with him, being as he was of such noble parents, relatives, and friends. Whether it was because he was besought by his own countrymen, or because the saint was grieved at witnessing so much barbarism, so little refinement, not only in the customs of ordinary life, but in the religious one, that, burning with the ardent desires for working good for the salvation of souls—the service of God—in order that

His holy laws should be made known, considering himself a debtor to the uninstructed as well as to the learned, placed as he had been by God in the Church, he undertook three works of great labour and of much fruit on behalf of that people. The first was to invent and form characters, proper letters for them to write their own language. It was different from the rest, from the Hebrew, and the Greek, and the Latin, not only in speech and accent, but even in substance, without any analogy to them, and therefore it was well that it should differ also in the form of the letters. That people were so plunged in barbarism and bereft of culture that they neither knew how to read or write their own tongue. There was nothing more required of our holy patriarch to do but this work in order that it might be said of him that in all things which were rare and exceptional in letters he was truly unique. In the knowledge of theology and the sacred Scriptures he was equal to the best, and none exceeded him, since among the greatest he was master. In the contemplation of moral and natural philosophy the best of the Greeks could not excel him. In the knowledge of tongues and variety of erudition there was no one of his time to compare with him, nor indeed in previous ages. He only needed to be the inventor of new characters and letters, and be, so to say, the father of some new language in order to be the equal of the celebrated Cadmus of Phœnicia, inventor of letters according as the world has received it—I know not whether this question has been well understood or investigated — of Palamedes, Simonides, Epicarmus of Greece, of Toot or Taanto of the Egyptians, and so worthy of having applied to him the two versicles of Zeno in praise of the first :—

> Sum patria Phœnix, quis livor? sum tamen ille
> Cadmus, cui debet Græcia tota libros.

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

St. Jerome translates the Sacred Scriptures into Slavonic. He arranges the Divine Office

At this point of our history it becomes opportune to consider another very pious and holy work which St. Jerome undertook in regard to the sacred Scriptures, and by so doing we will fulfil our promise of concluding the subject.

Some authors state that he also translated the holy books from the Hebrew into the Slavonic tongue, this being the common language spoken in his native place. I believe he undertook this labour and brought it to a conclusion whilst dwelling in Rome. This appears plausible, forasmuch as his own compatriots must have become aware that he had left the desert and had returned from Syria to the holy city, that he held a distinguished position, and was renowned for his sanctity and doctrine, since his fame had penetrated to every part; and it is quite in reason that they should have sought him out, wishing to converse with him, being as he was of such noble parents, relatives, and friends. Whether it was because he was besought by his own countrymen, or because the saint was grieved at witnessing so much barbarism, so little refinement, not only in the customs of ordinary life, but in the religious one, that, burning with the ardent desires for working good for the salvation of souls—the service of God—in order that

His holy laws should be made known, considering himself a debtor to the uninstructed as well as to the learned, placed as he had been by God in the Church, he undertook three works of great labour and of much fruit on behalf of that people. The first was to invent and form characters, proper letters for them to write their own language. It was different from the rest, from the Hebrew, and the Greek, and the Latin, not only in speech and accent, but even in substance, without any analogy to them, and therefore it was well that it should differ also in the form of the letters. That people were so plunged in barbarism and bereft of culture that they neither knew how to read or write their own tongue. There was nothing more required of our holy patriarch to do but this work in order that it might be said of him that in all things which were rare and exceptional in letters he was truly unique. In the knowledge of theology and the sacred Scriptures he was equal to the best, and none exceeded him, since among the greatest he was master. In the contemplation of moral and natural philosophy the best of the Greeks could not excel him. In the knowledge of tongues and variety of erudition there was no one of his time to compare with him, nor indeed in previous ages. He only needed to be the inventor of new characters and letters, and be, so to say, the father of some new language in order to be the equal of the celebrated Cadmus of Phœnicia, inventor of letters according as the world has received it—I know not whether this question has been well understood or investigated—of Palamedes, Simonides, Epicarmus of Greece, of Toot or Taanto of the Egyptians, and so worthy of having applied to him the two versicles of Zeno in praise of the first :—

> Sum patria Phœnix, quis livor? sum tamen ille
> Cadmus, cui debet Græcia tota libros.

And of our doctor we can well say, not only that the Slavonians owe to him all books, but all the Church. The second labour was to set in order the divine office in the same language for them, the manner of conducting prayer in the Church, the celebration of mass and all appertaining to the Christian doctrine under the same order and skill as he had arranged in the Latin Church for her supreme head, which is Rome, to the great glory of that country. The third labour of his was to translate all the books of the Bible into the same language, in order that these Slavonians should not be deprived of so great a treasure.

Blondo, in his book *De Italia Illustrata*, when treating on the eleventh region, which is Istria, says as follows: "There are many who believe that St. Jerome was a native of Dalmatia because he was the inventor of the letters they use, which are different from the Latin and the Greek, and which subsequently were called Slavonic by the people who anciently in Germany were called Slavonians and now are called Bohemians. And not alone did he invent and compose letters for those peoples, but he also translated from the Greek into this new language the divine office, which Christians universally use even now. This boon was confirmed to them by Eugenius IV. of glorious memory, the matter having passed through our hands on the occasion when in Florence the union was effected of the Greeks and Armenians; and the Jacobites, Nestorians, and Ethiopians received from the same Pope Eugenius the laws and decrees by which they were to be governed." From these words of Blondo is clearly gathered how well established it was in all Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Bohemia, that St. Jerome had effected these labours and given the people these books, since with no manner of doubt did they acknowledge them as his. And

whereas he arranged for them, and translated the divine office, as it was generally recited in the Church, into that singular language and new writing, therefore he must also have done the same with the holy Scriptures, of which, as we have seen above, the whole was recited and read during the course of the year. And in those times the lessons were not so short or so curtailed as they are now (this being due to our own tepidity and want of fervour); rather there was nothing left in the book which contained the lessons but which was read. Let it be understood that the Church has never absolutely prohibited the translation of the sacred Scriptures into the common languages, for the catalogue ordered to be made by Pius V. in the fourth ruling permits the perusal of the holy Scriptures in the vernacular to such as in the opinion of the prelates might be a source of spiritual profit. Holy Church does not wish holy writ to be handled except with great reverence, nor made common, nor that in the use of the Church and her offices the lessons which are worthy of the highest reverence be read in the common language—this is also a sentence in the Tridentine Council,[1] but only in those three languages which it pleased God to honour by placing them in the title of the Cross at His Crucifixion, viz.: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—in which languages from the beginning the holy book had been written. It is a singularly admirable fact and worthy of consideration, that never have the sacred Scriptures been read or sung in the divine office in any language which could be called common to all, neither among the Jews nor among the Greeks or the Latins, for when the Scriptures have been read in the temples and synagogues few of the people understood them, and we have clear proof that since the time of Esdras at least the sacred language was not common to the Jews. From

[1] Session 22, cap. 8 et 9.

chapter viii. of the second book of this great scribe it stands that the Scriptures were read in Hebrew and not in Syriac or Chaldean, and that it was not understood unless it was explained to them; and therein it is said that the people greatly rejoiced when Esdras and the Levites explained to them the law. Since that time until the present in all the synagogues the Testament is read in Hebrew, which is understood only by the teachers who study it carefully.

As regards the Greek language we also find that in the time of our saintly doctor throughout the east, the translation of the Septuagint was read under the divers corrections of Lucianus, Origen, and Hesychius. We also know that the Greek language was not common in all the provinces therein referred—Antioch, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine; while in Galatia, which stands between Antioch and Constantinople, Greek was not spoken, but a kind of French or a language derived from Trèves, a place on the confines of Germany and France, as the saintly doctor says in the prologue to the epistle to the Galatians.[1] Who it was who took this language there, and how, will be shown later. Syria had a language of its own, Egypt also. Our saint says that the great Father Anthony wrote some epistles in the mother tongue of Egypt. De Efren says that he wrote many things in Syriac, and here in this royal library of San Lorenzo are extant his homilies, with letters and in a language which are now used by the Armenians. And what is more, Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia Minor, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, despite that the language spoken there resembles somewhat the Greek, nevertheless varies so much that the people of the different places can scarcely understand each other. As regards the Latin, it offers no difficulty, for all

[1] Præfat. in 2 lib. *Com. Epist. ad Galat.*

know the language, and it is worthy of note that although Africa has produced so many singularly learned men in letters, we know of no one throughout its vast extent who has translated the sacred writings into the Punic, African, or Phœnician tongues, for thus does our doctor call the latter when writing on the Epistle to the Galatians, because that tongue came from a part of Syria called Phœnicia. Yet the Latin tongue, in which the sacred Scriptures were always read in Africa, was never a common language nor vulgar, as may be seen in St. Cyprian[1] and in St. Augustine.[2] In Spain it is proved from St. Isidore in the books of the Divine Offices, that the sacred Scriptures were always read in the Latin tongue.

The same is proved from the Council of Toledo, book iv. chapter xi., wherein is ordained and disposed the order in which the divine offices were to be performed, and in chapter xii. and in others it appears they were said in Latin; and it is very certain that it is now over 900 years since the use of Latin was lost in Spain, indeed there is no certitude that Latin was ever used as a common language. Our saint gives us to understand that in the Balearic Isles there was spoken a language which was half Greek, at least this was the case after the Goths entered into Spain when the Romans left in her were exterminated, now more than a thousand years ago, Latin became so little used and so forgotten through the preponderance of the Goths that it became very rare. On the other hand the Moors of Africa by their entry destroyed what relics remained, and poor Spain became filled with uncouth languages and barbaric expressions of which she will never again be altogether freed. England and Scotland (called under the name of Albion or Britannides

[1] Cyprian, *Sermo de Oratione Dominica.*
[2] August. 2 *De Doctr. Christian.* c. 13.

by Dionysius and Ptolemy) have had many changes of language, yet never have they had the sacred Scriptures made in any of them but only in the Latin, as is affirmed by Bede[1] in the first book of the history of these peoples. The same is affirmed by Waldensis.[2] In France it was the same, never was the Latin tongue a common language, as is proved by Albinus Flaccus Alcuin, the preceptor of Charlemagne in the book *On the Divine Offices*, and Amalarion who flourished in the year 840. That in Gaul (many provinces are included under this name) there should have been many differences of the common language is a thing well known by every one, and some of these languages are said to be of such antiquity that it has been even said they were previous to Latin and Greek, and that these had their origin from them.[3] Our great Father, to whom naught that was good of ancient times was unknown, says in the second prologue to the Epistle to the Galatians, that previous to the occupation of the Gauls by the Franks, Latin was very different to that of the Gallic language, which is a good argument in support of its antiquity. In Italy without doubt the sacred Scriptures were always read in the Church and divine offices in the Latin tongue, and the order of the offices was the same as now since the times of our saint, as we have already proved. Latin was not, nor ever has been, common there, but there have been other common languages. Radevicus,[4] an historian of some centuries back, in the Book ii. of the *Deeds of Frederic* says that at the election of Pope St. Victor the people cried in acclamation *Papa Victore Sante Pietro Pelgge;* whence it is seen how debased the Roman tongue was at the time in

[1] Beda, *l. Histor. Anglic.* cap. i.
[2] Waldens. t. 3, *Sacrament.* tit. 3 et 4.
[3] Gorop. *in Hermaten.*
[4] Radevicus, lib. 2, cap. 20.

Rome. St. Thomas Aquinas, writing some hundred of years back in his commentaries on chapter xiv. of the Epistle to the Corinthians, says that in his time it was quite another language which was spoken by the people commonly, to the one in which the Scriptures were read in the Churches.

From all this discourse we have clearly seen that in the Church, universally speaking, the sacred Scriptures have not been read but in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; and this fact admits of no manner of doubt or exception. Moreover, that these three languages are very rare, and never been vulgar and common, in this way, that to the people they should be as common as those they familiarly speak and converse in, but that they have a distinction and separation as a fact of especial consideration and mystery, as things set apart, which suffices to confound the hardihood of those who feel to the contrary, and would wish to profane the divine mysteries; and an all-sufficing argument to quiet the desires of some of the faithful, who, under the plea of zeal for some good, but not according to science, wish to introduce this, for it is clearly seen that God has never willed to permit this in any period, or time, or nation, and it is well that these should conform their wills and their purposes to what is manifestly by a long experience the will of God and the desire of the Church.

If St. Jerome translated the Scriptures into the common language of Slavonia, it was to remedy, in his great zeal, the native uncouthness of the inhabitants of that country. This in truth was the intention of our saint in undertaking these labours and holy occupations, although he does not actually point it out in his works. This subject of the Slavonic language is so strange and obscure that such as have striven their utmost to investigate the origin of the Gothic nations and northern countries cannot come to any

explanation, and admit their ignorance of its antiquity and its character.[1] I believe that they themselves ignore it. Probably the Slavonians, being ignorant of their own antiquity and the derivation and origin of their tongue and characters, in the time of Eugenius IV. were minded to take for their patron St. Jerome, and exalt their country and language by the labours of so great a saint. The fact of the Slavonians having in their language the divine office and nearly the whole of the sacred writings might very well have come by another way, let us grant this to have been so, because the traditions of a country can effect much, and in matters of history are of great authority. Should it have been St. Jerome who translated all this into the common language of the people, we can perceive the good reason he had for it, and the holy motives which may have urged him to do so. Similarly does Æneas Sylvius speak[2] of the Pope allowing the natives of Moravia leave to celebrate the divine offices in the language of the Slavonians some hundreds of years before. The same permission was granted to the Ruthenians, Armenians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians in their vulgar tongues. To the first named this permission was necessary and urgent, because the whole of that kingdom was converted to the faith at once; they had no ministers who knew Latin, and these could not easily be brought from other places, and it was a lesser inconvenience to permit them to celebrate in their own language than to deprive them of the sacraments and the divine offices of the Church. Thus also did it seem to our saint, and to the intent that the inhabitants of Dalmatia or of Istria, who spoke Slavonic, should not remain without this spiritual light and attainment he did this work.

[1] Joan Grap. *De Origine.* Antwerp, lib. 7. Gotodanica.
[2] *De Origen Bohem.* cap. 13.

Never has there been a nation in the world, whatever its religion might be, or what gods they might profess to worship, but separated their sacred things from things profane, and made some distinction from the common. It has been, so to say, a first principle established in the hearts of those, who have honoured anything as divine, never to make it common or to vulgarise it. The ancients perceived all this, hence they observed this reserve in sacred things, they kept from vilifying and profaning them, and this also does holy Church practise and keep with far greater reason.

DISCOURSE THE SIXTH

The Life led by St. Jerome in Rome. The Exercises he practised. What Effects his Words and Example produced.

Having seen in a cursory manner what things St. Jerome had effected in the universal service of the Church, by employing his powers and genius to the widening of her state, things, in truth, of so much worth and weight, the foundation of all that is erected in this beautiful body, it will be as well now to proceed revealing, step by step, the details of his life. The details concerning the small things of this saint are of no little importance, because, although at the time they may have seemed small, their results were great, or better said, they became extended and widened to the universal benefit of the faithful. The lives of holy and learned doctors partake of such grandeur, that what appears small in them is in truth the seed of great fruits; they are like the stars in the firmament of the Church (as St. Paul compares them), which, albeit some may seem so small to our sight, yet, if any of them were wanting, a gap would be caused in the ordering of the influence which they exercise in the world. Such also are the arrangements in this living heaven and firmament of the Church, that from even the smallest of these planets of hers so much profit descends to us, that if any of these, so to say, small things

be wanting, it would cause great damage in us. The course of life which the holy doctor followed in Rome, as we have already hinted, was of such a kind that in no one point did it differ from the life he lived in the desert; he only bodily changed the place, the soul was always in the same condition. Neither the rank of priest of Antioch, to which he had been raised by Paulinus, influenced him to withdraw one hair's-breadth from his strictness of life, nor the great intimacy to which he was admitted by Damasus, nor even the Cardinalate of Rome, caused him to turn away his gaze from the aim of the purpose of his life. The same hard life and manner of treating his body, the same strict fasts did he pursue. Under his outward robes he wore a rough hair-shirt, and his bed and food and other necessaries of common life were like those of Nitria and Palestine. Only one thing, the occupations of the day, was different, to his sorrow. In his former life all things were wrapped in God and in the holy Scriptures; here it became inevitable to pour himself out in a great crowd of affairs which depended on his office and its immediate business. It required of him to leave frequently his retirement. He had to frequent streets and squares. He strove to keep such custody of his eyes that by them could be seen where those of the soul were placed. This holy man was well aware how easily a man goes out of himself if he neglects to guard these windows; how difficult it is to withdraw within, and how ready danger is at hand; how common it is that if the soul goes out by them, on its return death has meanwhile entered in by these very same windows. Under this vigilant care the streets of Rome, crowded as they were with people, were a desert to Jerome. The noise of the crowds and of the market-place never interrupted his prayer and his meditation, because from the continual abstraction of the senses the

practice of withdrawing his spirit to the interior had effected in his ears the habit of not hearing, nor did he hear anything but what was of importance to the soul. And in truth, if the ears of the evil-minded prove so deaf to divine things that, as Isaias says, and St. Paul and even the Divine Master Himself declare, that *hearing they do not hear*, why cannot the ears of the saints do as much? For all human affairs they are deaf; and truly was Jerome deaf to the tumult of the world. As to what appertained to the good of the neighbour, the fulfilment of his duties, attendance on the poor, to favour those in need, to be the refuge of the afflicted—for all these things his senses were indeed very wide awake.

Such was the life of Jerome in Rome, and as such it became the admiration of all men. While in proportion as he withdrew his own eyes from men, so did he draw upon himself the eyes of all. Men desired to converse with him, some, indeed, with the object of leading better lives, others in order to improve in their studies, and others again from curiosity, or to find out what was within, or for no better reason than to follow the stream of the people and be thought of some importance, by reason of their communicating with a man universally held as a saint and of great learning. There are many of these in the world, who treat with the servants of God and with men of letters rather for outward ostentation, for neither do they improve in customs, nor in science do they advance a step, satisfied with being called "friends of a saint" and of one "who knows all that is of the very best." No doubt but that such as these imagine that Heaven, or the House of Wisdom, is like to the banquets of the world where the principal guest is at liberty to bring in a friend, and who enters under his wing. But they are deceived; for unless he comes in a wedding garment (I mean the garb of

penitence), and should labour by the sweat of his brow day and night, he will not be allowed to cross the threshold of his door and enter in. And if by chance he should come in mixed up in the crowd, the master of the banquet will walk in, and, on finding one there without a wedding garment, he will order him to be turned out into the exterior darkness, for outside all is shadow and death. Let no one depend solely upon saying, "*I have a great devotion to St. Jerome and to St. Peter, if they do not imitate the tears and penance of Peter and of Jerome*," nor indeed have these any other friends. Neither let it be said that in Rome all were friends, who approached our saint, as will be seen farther on. Many approached our Redeemer, and many indeed followed after Him, and even constrained Him in the crowds and concerns of men. Some followed in order to listen to Him, wishing to behold a brighter light, and thus be enabled to quit their ignorance, others to be healed of their maladies; others, again, in order to calumniate His deeds, full of envy like the Pharisees; and some, again, for curiosity, to see miracles, listen to discourses, hear and see curious things, and enjoy all marvels.

The same occurred to Jerome in Rome, and each of these types were there, and all who listened to his marvellous doctrines and conversation later on produced their respective fruits from the seeds he had sown, as happened to those who followed Christ. It was a great labour for our saint to attend to so many different persons and business; he felt greatly concerned to find himself deprived of his sacred exercises. He remedied this damage with the quickness and promptitude of his genius, despatching with resolution and brevity the most difficult cases, and by curtailing his sleep at night, and by the silence and quietude of the hour replacing the losses of the day; he spent the time in prayer and in the perusal

of holy books, learning there what he was to act afterwards; for such as are in public offices bind themselves to this, when they venture to undertake them—to watch while they sleep over those who are under their care. A great labour, indeed, is this were it not responded to by a great reward. It would be a thing out of all reason to yearn for honours here, and in the life to come more glory with equal or less labour. This was not taught us by Him whom St. Peter calls Prince of Pastors, nor will it be judged thus by the code which He left signed by His example. He preached and healed by day, and by night He watched in prayer, and in prayer to God beseeching His Father to give us what He had resolved to do for His glory and our advantage. This was the plan and the method of the life of the cardinal priest, the favourite of Damasus, and this also must be the lives of the favourites of kings, under the strict obligation they have of counselling what they see to be requisite, even at the risk of losing the favour of their intimacy, unless they esteem that of God of smaller account.

Amid the multitude who followed our saint were many, indeed the greater number, of the matrons of the nobility of Rome, similarly as in Judæa Christ was followed by the daughters of Jerusalem—apostolic women who left Him not, but followed Him even to the sepulchre. These noble women were, apart from their nobility, worthy of being admitted (despite that at first a persistent war was waged by the strict monk, until they eventually conquered) by reason of their great sanctity, zeal for virtue, desire of knowledge, yearning to quit the world to undertake great things for Christ, true descendants of those ancient matrons who were so justly celebrated, yet more so than they, for they effected greater deeds, since their aims were different and higher. Among them the most noteworthy were Marcella,

Melania, Asella, Albina, Marcelina, and above them all the most saintly matron Paula, widow of Toxotius Patricius, the mother of Blesilla and of the pious virgin Eustochium. We can well declare that in all truth the Church gained very considerably by this holy friendship, because these ladies were the occasion for many works and treatises made by the great doctor. These holy matrons, by their importunate pleadings, awakened in him desires for new labours; he condescended to their just desires, because from his conversation they became so enkindled with the love of God, and for the sacred Scriptures that their conversation had no other topic, nor did they cease from asking him questions and suggesting doubts, seeking for declaration, urging him to compose treatises and to write epistles, and to such an extent that the best which the great doctor has left us was done at the petition and prayer of these saintly women. What could there be seemingly in the Church farther removed from seeking for erudition and doctrine, variety of languages, expositions of recondite writings, translations of Hebrew and Greek, than women, and, moreover, Roman women, matrons occupied in the government of their states, the ruling of their homes, domestics, and a thousand other details following upon each of the above duties. They certainly were not assisted by the knowledge of other discipline, which generally induces a thirst for passing on to higher things, nor the emulation of others who ran before or together with them, nor the object of attaining profit and honours, nor had they other roots or principles such as are needed for entering on labour in so wide a field as the sacred Scriptures would reveal. Despoiled of all these, in order that it be seen that this was no human affair, God placed in their souls so vivid a desire for all this, that I feel constrained to say that, were it not for them, Jerome would

not be the great personage the Church celebrates to-day, at least not so great, for they made him, by their pleadings and with their holy importunities, to open the depths of his heart, drawing out from thence what he was enjoying in solitude to the signal loss of the Church. And to the great shame of many of the men of those times let it be said, that they not only did not imitate the diligence and study of these women, but they endeavoured to prevent them, and even raised scandal. And in these our times men are not less blameworthy, since they exhibit small desire and yearning to understand the secrets of the sacred writings, for we do not only take no heed to call forth by our questions and petitions those men to whom God has communicated these secrets, but we even gnash our teeth with wrath against the lives, occupations, genius, and labours of those who are engaged in doing so, if we see that they advance or acquire a great name. And what is above all things most reprehensible is, that we will not turn our attention to the writings of the holy doctors, but we prefer to peruse the discourses of men truly ignorant of the sacred Scriptures and what they are, and quote their pamphlets, and waste time, life, and money upon them, forgetful of St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and of St. Jerome, of whom they knew nothing more than if they had written their works in Low Arabic. But let us leave them in their ignorance, for we could never disillusion them. I will solely give them a sad prophecy, viz., that by pursuing this path they will neither amend their lives nor do any good to their neighbour, nor up to their last day will they become more learned or wiser than they were at first.

Among other exercises and particular spiritual practices of the love of God which Jerome held with these matrons, the principal one was to expound in the sacred books, the

psalms, and epistles, and other parts. During these discourses it became necessary for him to tell them for the easier comprehension of the passages, "Thus is it declared in the Greek text." "This, again, is as it is stated in the Hebrew, and so on." "This is wanting from the original, and this other is added, or amended, or obscure." On account of the translation of the Septuagint being what they perused, came the desire of these heroic women to know both the Greek and the Hebrew languages, for it appeared to them that the knowledge of these would be of great advantage for fully comprehending the sacred Scriptures. Some of these accordingly took up with great diligence the study of both Greek and Hebrew until they came to know them little less well than their saintly master. Among the books which Jerome read to them with great advantage was the *Ecclesiastes* of Solomon, as he states in an epistle[1] to Paula and Eustochium, her daughter. The wise doctor had selected with great prudence this book for their instruction, because the first thing to be instilled into the minds of persons of social worth, and position, and influence in the world is to make them understand of what small value the whole world is, and what small profit it is to us in time of need.

This, indeed, is the principal subject and aim of that book of Ecclesiastes; it came very apposite to those Roman matrons who were of so high a lineage and wealthy, so that convinced by the reasonings of the wise king who had tried all things to satiety, from his disillusion they also should learn disillusion, and from his penitence they likewise should learn their own, and be enabled to strike the balance of the losses and gains of this miserable business of earth, of the deceitful cupidity, and low sensuality, which give a result and computation

[1] *Epist.* 116.

in a wide vanity, the reaping a harvest of a great number of vanities. It would show them how much had been spent, little of which had been received, the irremediable results which would follow unless all things were left. He would lead them to understand what madness and folly it is to occupy the soul, to awaken thought, afflict the spirit, and consume life (for this is waste) in order to obtain riches, pleasures, tastes, property and servants, instead of considering these things attentively. What do these things place in the soul? What recompense does a man derive from this? What remains, or what accrues to him? Nothing remains to him; he finds nothing within, because on reaching the end of life he finds himself despoiled of them all, and these very things have been the actual causes of his course of life coming so quickly to an end. These great truths are all summed up in a vanity of infinite vanities, no receipts and a great outlay. This was the opening lesson which St. Jerome read to his saintly pupils, in order, in the first place, to open their eyes, and by means of a vivid persuasion draw out of their hearts the deep-set roots of the glory of this world, because until this be effected in the spiritual life there is nothing done, although they should have laboured for a thousand years. The effect of all this soon became visible in Blesilla and the great fruit of the holy lesson, because her disillusion and her life ended simultaneously. Blesilla was very beautiful and wealthy, had just been married, and was in her twentieth year; nevertheless she was never absent from the lesson, and when ended, besought the master to write down his instruction in order that during his absence she should have the lesson always before her eyes. Yet before this was effected our Lord read it to her by the experience of trials. He took first her husband from her, after only seven months of wedded

life. This loss was followed by obstinate fevers which brought her down to the point of death; she was enwrapped in the fire of this fever, and as in a crucible the fine gold of her soul was purified. Then during that crisis, comparing her own experience with the lesson given in *Ecclesiastes*, she beheld all things in the light of the wise man, and on rising from her sick bed she totally altered her life; she changed her apparel and turned the stateliness of her house and its arrangements from a superb palace into an humble monastery. She embraced the Cross of Christ, treading under foot all the glory of the world, and went forth to lead the life of a nun; she so courageously entered the state of penance that her new spouse Christ, satisfied with her love and the sorrow He perceived in her for not having always been His, that He was minded to take her to enjoy His kingdom.

Two letters did the saintly doctor write in divine strains in regard to this episode. I feel I would be doing wrong were I not to introduce here some portions of them, for two reasons—first, in order to verify what has been said, lest some might think that I have imagined all this, the conversation and communion between Jerome and these saintly women; and secondly, to reveal his sanctity and theirs. And that we should blush to see ourselves fit for so little and so womanish, being men, and they being women, yet with such heroic masculine powers. Writing to Marcella about the fever of Blesilla, and of the change in her manner of life, St. Jerome says as follows:—"Abraham was tempted in his son, and was found faithful. Joseph was sold in Egypt, so that in good time he should maintain his father and his brethren. Ezechiel was terrified at his approaching death, and wept bitter tears, and a further term of life was given of fifteen years. Peter the Apostle was overcome in the Passion of

our Lord, and after weeping sorrow-stricken at his fall, he heard from the mouth of the Divine One, *Feed my lambs.* Paul, the robber-wolf, and Benjamin, the little one, in swoon and ecstasy were blinded so that they should see, and full of a sudden terror and amazement, call "*Lord*" to Him whom but a short time before they had persecuted as a human enemy. Thus now, my Marcella, do we see our Blesilla burning for thirty days in a fierce fever, so that she should learn how to cast out from her the delights of a body which in a brief space of time will be riddled and consumed by worms. To her came the Lord Jesus to lay His hand upon her,[1] and she arose sound and well, full ready to serve Him. There was about her a species of languor and slothfulness, and being held by the bands of wealth, she lay in the sepulchre of the world; but Jesus was grieved; He groaned in the spirit and troubled Himself and with a loud voice cried out, *Blesilla! Come forth!*[2] At that strong cry she came to and arose. She walked on her feet, and at length seated herself at the table to eat with the Lord. Let the Jews threaten, mutiny, conjure, attempt to put to death the One who arose from the dead: only the Apostles rejoice. Well does she know that she owes her life to the One, who restored it to her, when she had lost it, and she also knows how to embrace those feet of His whom she had once feared for His rigorous justice. The body was almost bereft of soul, her limbs were lifeless, death had already grasped her in his arms! I ask now, Where are the remedies of her relatives? Where those words more empty than the smoke itself? She owes you nothing, oh ungrateful relatives! She who, already dead to the world, has arisen for Christ! Let him who has the sentiments of a Christian rejoice at the change, since he who is wrathful evidently

[1] Luke iv. 40.

[2] John ii. 43.

manifests how little he has of the Christian faith. The widow, who finds herself freed from the bonds of matrimony, has no need of anything else but to persevere in her state. And if any one should take scandal at the dress, sad, black, and rough, let him also take scandal at St. John, than whom, among those born of women, no greater prophet has arisen, and he is called angel; his destiny so lofty and great that he baptized the Lord God Himself, nevertheless he was arrayed in the rough garment of hair bound at the waist by a coarse rope. Does the gross and common food displease you? What could there be more rough than locusts?"

To this the saint adds some passages against the fashions of the day, the postures and the finery which was in use at that time, not only among ladies and maidens, but among the widows, who, as St. Paul expresses it, did not merit the title of widows; and he then adds: "This one widow used formerly to spend much time in beautifying herself. Her days were spent in demanding of her mirror whether anything was amiss or wanting: now with holy confidence she says—All of us unveiled and with a clear sight view ourselves in the mirror of the faith and of the glory of the Lord. Before this looking-glass we shall arrange and dress ourselves conformably with His image and likeness, passing from one degree of light into another like to the Spirit of the Lord." Formerly her maids were daily occupied for long hours in combing her hair, braiding, curling, and making crowns or high designs with it; but now, despised and disarranged, she is satisfied if her head be but covered. In other days the very feathers of her bed seemed hard to her, and her elegantly-furnished drawing-room she could scarce abide; but now she is the first to rise to prayer, she intones the *Alleluia* before any one else in a sweet

and tender voice, and is the first to commence the divine praises. She bends her bare knees on the bare ground, and by continual tears she bathes that countenance which formerly she spoiled with cosmetics!" Many other passages of this kind does he proceed recounting, to depict to us the change in Blesilla. These, however, suffice to manifest the powerful influence which the doctrines of the saint had exerted, the fruits of his lessons, the profit of his instructions, and the effects of his conversation in the minds of people so daintily brought up, and so patrician, surrounded by all that was most precious and esteemed by Roman luxury; how powerful his words and example had been. In those days that city was at the height of its luxury; its senators and matrons were most wealthy; they possessed large estates and wide lands; they were much given up to comforts and the delights of life; and, as we have said, these matrons and maidens were of the chiefest and highest of the aristocracy. Over all these did Jerome triumph with his doctrines, and by his discourses prevailed upon them to fling all the pleasures and joys of the world to the ground.

As regards the exercises of the sacred Scriptures, we can gather from the words he addressed to the mother of Blesilla, St. Paula,[1] what these exercises were, in an epistle wherein he tries to console her for her daughter's death: "Who can with tearless eyes call to mind a pious woman of only twenty who with such burning faith raised the Standard of the Cross? One would say she did not weep for her dead husband but for her maidenhood. Who can recall without emotion the force of her reasoning, the purity of her speech, the tenacity of her memory, and the acuteness of her genius? If you heard her speak Greek, you would declare that there could not have remained

[1] *Epist.* 25.

time for her to learn Latin. If she reverted to the mother tongue of Rome, there was no accent of a foreign tongue in her speech. What is a greater marvel (similarly to Origen, for which he became so widely admired in Greece), in a few days—I do not mean months, but days—she overcame in such a way the difficulties of the Hebrew tongue, that in the recital and singing of the Psalms she competed with her mother. Blesilla had become so worn and weak and ill that she could hardly walk without assistance; nevertheless, in her hands were ever the prophets or the gospels, her eyes ever streaming with tears. Sobs prevented her words, yet her tender heart did not allow her parched tongue to rest. When her saintly form was in burning fever, and her rough bed surrounded by her relatives, these were her last words: *Beseech the Lord Jesus Christ to pardon me, because I was unable to fulfil what I had desired to do.* You are safe, Blesilla; I am confident that from thence you approve the truth which here we are stating."

From all this is clearly seen how brilliantly the exercises of letters and virtues were followed, and what work the words and example of this father was effecting; how fervently must his words have come forth from his heart, what stability they carried with them since they effected such havoc among the worldly luxury of the most cultured people of the world. I feel I cannot keep silence, nor is it just that a further paragraph of this letter should be omitted, because it is of great importance, not alone as a confirmation of what has been said, but for the comfort and relief of souls afflicted by the loss of children, and other trials. Thus does he speak of Paula: "I cannot utter what I wish to say without sighing. When in the midst of the funeral ceremonies you swooned away and were taken home almost without life in you, the people murmured,

and from between their teeth they hissed out these words: *Is it not what we have so often said?* It is dreadful for her to witness the death of her daughter from sheer fasting, and would to God, that if not from her first marriage, at least from her second nuptials she should have left her a grandchild. Until when is this hapless class of monks to be permitted? Why do we not stone them? Why not fling them into the river? They have deceived the poor mother; for now we clearly perceive that the thought of becoming a nun had never entered her mind, since we see her weeping with greater grief the death of her children than ever any Gentile wept. How greatly would Satan's delight be now that he is trying to gain your soul by setting before your eyes the causes for a just grief, while he places before you the image of your dead triumphant daughter, to assume to overcome the mother, and when he finds her alone to encounter the sister."

Then farther on he says: "How many torments do you deem you are causing our Blesilla, on seeing that Christ is thus treated by you? Methinks I hear her, and that from thence she is crying out to you: 'O mother, if at any time you felt love for me; if I suckled at your breast; if from you I learned holy warnings, I pray you do not envy my glory, do not act in such a way that for ever we should remain apart. Do you perchance think that I am alone? Let me tell you that in your place I have as my mother, Mary, the mother of the Lord. Many do I see here, whom I had never known. Oh! what better company this is! I have here also Anna, she who in former times prophesied in the Gospel, and so that you may further rejoice, be it known to you that I obtained in my three years' widowhood what she gained after long years of trials—one equal palm of chastity did we receive. You feel great compassion for me because I left the world; yet

I, on my part, lament your hapless condition, since you are still bound in the sad prison-house of the world, yet fighting in the doubtful combat, at one time cast down to the very depth by ire, now by avarice, at other times by pleasures, and a perfect squadron of furious vices. If in truth you wish to be my mother, endeavour to please Christ, because I do not acknowledge any one as such who displeases my Lord. All these things is she saying and others which I keep silent about, and she is praying for you to our Lord, and for me also, as I trust to her soul to obtain the pardon of my sins, because I admonished her and persuaded her, and because I received and brought upon myself at much cost that she should be saved the anger of all her relatives. Therefore, so long as the soul rules this body of mine, so long as the course of my life should last, I promise to you, testify and vow, that never shall my tongue cease to speak of her; to her I dedicate my labours; for her shall my genius be exercised, and there will be no undertaking in which Blesilla shall not be heard." And he concludes with other touching reasons in order to console the mother for the loss of so beloved a daughter.

And in the course of this narrative we have seen in passing, the spirit of the children of the world, how forgetful they are of that which is eternal, how common it has been always to show disfavour to the good, to persecute it, condemn and blaspheme it. A great consolation is this to those who are journeying with some degree of earnestness, and who endeavour to take others on with them. There is nothing which renders the enemy of souls more furious than this. His aim has always been to discredit virtue, to make her the subject of suspicion, to prognosticate evils of her, so that even such as are circumspect should be scandalised. He would wish to persuade the world that what is to

the purpose is to follow a smooth path, and what the disciples of his school call a plain way is to eat and drink, to laugh, play, and even swear; never to withdraw oneself for a moment to think of the wretchedness of one's past life, to form purposes of amendment for what remains of it, and never ponder over what they owe to God, nor upon what He has done for them, all this being dangerous and suspicious. Fasting they call hypocrisy; hair-shirts, folly; silence, bestiality; retirement, dangerous; in a word, all that is outside their rules, and hints at the contempt of the world, and of penance, is an invention or insanity; while all that corresponds to the wide road which Christ has declared leads to perdition is a plain life, and so smooth that men proceed from vice to vice, from sin to sin, ascending from one to the other, as they say, by a steady road to hell.

What they said of St. Jerome, that very same do they say now, because the enemy which we always carry on our shoulders is ever the same, and the one which favours him outside and urges him on, is one who is never weary.

DISCOURSE THE SEVENTH

Continuation of the Life and Labours of St. Jerome in Rome. Information is afforded respecting some Works he composed.

From the foregone discourses glimpses of the life which our glorious father led have been revealed, the works and the labours he pursued, and brought to bear in saintly souls, who were so well disposed for receiving the seed of highest doctrine from his lips, as was quickly perceived by the great fruits which they produced in the change of life, and in some by a blessed death. I feel confident that Jerome was the occasion of the signal change effected in the noble Matron, Melania, who was one of the wealthiest and noblest ladies in Rome. She left all things and departed to Jerusalem to lead a conventual life. Previous to the coming of the holy doctor to Rome, this custom of matrons becoming nuns, or of going to holy lands, Jerusalem, or Bethlehem, had never been heard of or comprehended; but after his arrival nought was heard but these things. So greatly can good communications influence people. This great man by his eloquence wielded a great power, by his words and actions harmonising with each other. In the epistle which has been under discussion,[1] among other reasons which he

[1] *Epist.* xxv. cap. 3.

gives Paula for restraining her grief for her lost daughter is the example of Melania. "I do not wish," he says, "to repeat old fables. I wish to consider present things. The holy Matron, Melania, truly noble among the Christians of our times, while yet her husband had scarcely been laid in his grave, lost two of her children. I am going to state a thing which seems almost impossible to believe, but Christ is witness of the truth. Who would not have thought that then this woman would have given way to a terrible fit of grief, or perhaps even attempted her own life? Yet she never shed a tear; she remained there immovable, then she went and cast herself at the feet of Christ crucified, and embracing them, with a smile on her countenance, said: "*Lord, now indeed I will serve Thee with a fuller heart and with greater freedom, since Thou hast been pleased to deliver me from so great a charge.*" And leaving her possessions, goods, and wealth to her last child, and at the commencement of the winter, she took ship to Jerusalem. We might say of St. Jerome in those times what the Pope Urban said of St. Cecilia: "Lord, Thy servant Jerome, like a wise, solicituous bee, serves Thee, bringing to the hive of Thy holy land the flowers of the gardens of Rome." He performed many other services for the Church whilst still dwelling in this city. Through the pleadings of Fabiola he wrote the two celebrated treatises, "on the forty-two mansions," which the children of Israel made, from the time they passed the Red Sea, coming out of Egypt, until they reached the shores of the Jordan, and entered into the promised land. He expounded these in the spiritual sense, comparing the text and showing them to be an express figure of the road we ourselves journey in this captivity of the world and of sin, to the life and promised liberty, after passing the sea of the red baptism in the blood of Christ,

wherein our enemies are left drowned, and we are delivered on the shore. This one work alone of St. Jerome would have sufficed to render him immortal and well worthy of the title of "*Doctor of the Church.*"

The other treatise was an epistle,[1] wherein he declares the secret meanings of the vesture and ornaments of the high priest in the old law. At the commencement he reveals the sacraments and mysteries of many of those sacrifices, ceremonies, laws, and rites; then he comes to the purpose, drawing much light of doctrine from those early shadows for succeeding ages. Here he also wrote that renowned epistle to the Virgin Eustochium on the "Guarding of Virginity," since she was the one who among the daughters of Paula had taken the vow of virginity, and became the constant companion of the life and pilgrimages of her saintly mother. This epistle was very much discussed and even murmured at. Jerome in it reprehends all the corrupted portions of the Church and the classes of vices which may enter into the lives of persons bearing the title of "*Servants of Jesus Christ*," persons living in retirement, professors of sanctity on the outside, the life led within being very different, their consciences being very wide and unwholesome. This epistle offended the clergy, the monks, the affectedly pious women, widows, and maidens, to whom all these titles were inappropriate. I mean such as those who dwelt in Rome; and quickly this resentment extended throughout Italy and France, as may be seen from the defence made of it by Sulpicius Severus.[2]

Without doubt St. Jerome in this work reveals and brings forward the secret sores, and he who is touched with the evil, on finding that his wounds are being

[1] *Epist.* cxxviii.

[2] Severus Sulpicius, dialog. primo, *De virtutibus monachor.* Oriental.

approached, cannot dissemble the pain and cries out. St. Jerome will not endure hypocrisy; he deeply feels the honour of Christ and of His Church; he reckons it a great wickedness to bear the name of priest and of monk, and yet in the interior to be what cannot be mentioned without the blush of shame. In all his letters and treatises it is remarkable how constantly and generally he enjoins reading and prayer. It is impossible without these two that the soul should grow in virtues, any more than that the crops of the fields should thrive without rain, and in the gardens the flowers should grow without watering them. About that time he also wrote other epistles and treatises. To Marcella he sent, among others, a very important epistle, in which he gives the ten divine names more frequently found in the Hebrew lessons; another one on such words in the Hebrew and the Greek as remained untranslated, such as *Allelu-ia*, *Amen*, *Maranatha*, *Diapsalma*. About this time there arose a disciple of the famous Arian Auxentius, called Elvidius or Helvidius, a man as bold as he was ignorant. He attempted to obscure the virginal purity of the mother of Jesus Christ. I do not wish to further declare the foulness of his error. He wrote a book and published it, and despite that he was a man of no erudition or doctrine he found men to read and give credit to it. From this there grew a sect, or followers, who were called Helvidians and Antidicomarianites, I mean to say, sectaries and heretics, against the virginity of Mary. And, forasmuch as many pious men saw with dismay that this shameful error would cause havoc among the weak, they all turned to Jerome, as though they sought to indicate that to him appertained the defence of the case. And they judged rightly, because, if in all the discourses and colloquies he ever had Bethlehem on his lips, the crib, and the holy land, the cave where the holiest virgin was

delivered, and wherein was laid on the straw the Bread which satisfies the world, and was ever treating upon these loved things, his desires being ever to implant them in the hearts of each one, it was just that he should not permit a single spot to blemish the fair name of a maid so pure. As men perceived that Jerome was silent, they decided to call him forth. They besought him with much feeling to reply to the effrontery of this heretic. And he did so. The saint took up his pen, and with wisdom and erudition quite his own, he wrote the book *De perpetua virginitate*, which is found among his works, against Helvidius, and the error was destroyed at once. At the beginning of the book St. Jerome excuses himself for his delay and silence, saying that, if he had hesitated answering the book of Helvidius, it was not on account of any difficulty of the matter, but because by replying, in defence of a truth so well established and manifest, to a rude man (who scarcely knew grammar), it would be to do him too great an honour, but he would be very well pleased to answer him, in order to conquer him. Jerome wrote this when in Rome, as he himself says in the epistle to the Galatians. "I remember," he says, "that being in Rome, moved by the pleadings of many brethren, I wrote a book on the perpetual virginity of the holy mother of the Lord." In this book, not only did he convince the heretic as regards the chief intention of the blessed virgin, but he even manifests it to be certain that her holy spouse, St. Joseph, was also a virgin.[1]

At the petition of the holy Pontiff, Damasus, Jerome performed many other useful things in Rome on behalf of the Church. He expounded and declared[2] what the meaning was of that oft-repeated word *Hosiagna*, or, as though corrupting the word, we say *Osanna* or *Hosanna*.

[1] Lib. *De perpet. virgin.* cap. ix.

[2] *Epist.* cxlv.

And availing himself of this occasion, while seeking the root from the Hebrew source, as he says, he expounds nearly the whole of Psalm cxvii., whence the verse is taken which the evangelists quote. He also expounded to him the parable of the prodigal son[1] and waster, and of the thrifty and diligent man, in the spiritual sense. At the petition of the same Pontiff, he made the translation of the Homilies of Origen on the *Canticles*, and forasmuch as the prologue of that work was the occasion of the dissensions which arose between him and Rufinus, and from these this individual drew the motive for his intemperate anger, it will be as well that we should here say something on this affair, and understand his small reason, or great malice for doing so.

He says as follows: "Although Origen in some works triumphed over others, yet in this one on the *Canticles* he surpassed himself, for after having written ten volumes, which contain nearly 20,000 verses, he expounds first the Septuagint, then Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian, and, furthermore, in the fifth edition (which it is said was found on the shores of Actium), with such excellency and clearness that it appears he verified in himself what is said, '*The king hath brought me into his storeroom.*'[2] But putting aside, however, that work which demands infinite space, great labour, and expenditure, to translate so many things into Latin, these two other treatises, which he composed for the little ones, who have need of milk, in simple diction, I have wished to translate, preserving rather fidelity than ornate writing, offering you in them not the height of the meaning, but something to win for you a taste for them. From this you may judge of what esteem those large ones be, since these that are small contain so much."

[1] *Epist.* cxlvi.

[2] Canticles, 1, 3.

From these just and due praises of Origen occasion was taken by Rufinus to declare our saint to be an Origenist. And as to him it appeared that Origenist and heretic were not far from being synonyms, he had no patience to be called such. From this arose a storm.

St. Jerome also wrote in Rome an exposition of the Hebrew alphabet to Paula Urbica, to which I have already drawn attention, and, as I also said, he follows in this *Eusebius of Cæsarea.* It was singular this desire of women, who asked the saintly doctor about things which I marvel they had information of and taste for. I do not think that ever before or after has been witnessed in the Church up to the present time so novel a case of so many matrons being gathered together, so saintly and so tender, desirous of understanding the sacred writings and the secrets contained in them.

Yet at this juncture methinks that some malicious spirit secretly judged proper to cast aspersions for this reason on the saintly man by saying that many were the treatises and epistles and commentaries which he wrote for women, and few, comparatively, that he addresses to, and writes for men. That lofty things of such gravity and recondite, as are the mysteries of the holy Scriptures, should not be communicated to them. That it implied too much familiarity and is worthy of remark, that he should teach Greek and Hebrew to them, a thing we have no proof he did, but to only a few men, and that it seems impossible there should be so few wishing to be taught and to learn them, and that he was better pleased to teach women. These charges are not new, nor to murmur at either, because malice is very old, and the same is both inherited and acquired. In those days all this was whispered into the ears of the saint.

St. Jerome felt the necessity of affording some satisfac-

tion to those who thus murmured. And they received the reply in an epistle which he addressed to the virgin Principia when sending to her the exposition of Psalm xliv. And whereas he replied for himself, we ourselves are relieved of that duty. Let us hear his own answer, and receive our own share of his shafts. In the commencement of his Epistle[1] he says as follows: "I am well aware, Principia, my daughter in the Lord, that I am greatly reprehended because I address women, and that I prefer the weaker sex to men, taking more notice of the women than of men. I have need, in the first place, to answer those who murmur against me, then I will proceed to treat upon what you ask me. Did men occupy themselves with the sacred Scriptures and demand as many questions as women do, I would not speak with women. If Barak[2] had willed to go to battle, Deborah would not have triumphed over the conquered enemies. They enclose Jeremias in a prison, and because the condemned town would not receive the man, who had come to prophesy to them, God sent them the woman, Holda.[3] The priests and the Pharisees crucified the Son of God, and Mary Magdalen was the one who wept by the Cross, who prepared the ointments, who sought Him at the sepulchre, asking of the gardener and recognising in Him her Lord. It is she who runs with the news to the Apostles; tells them that He is risen: if they doubt, she herself has perfect confidence."

In this way he continues proving and confirming his words by a number of other passages in Scripture, with incisive allusions and examples, and concludes his reasonings by saying: "Christ speaks to the Samaritan woman at the well, better satisfied in His thirst for souls with the faith of the believer than with the food which the

[1] *Epist.* 140. [2] Judges iv. [3] Hierome 36, 4 Reg. 22.

disciples had purchased for Him. Apollo, an apostolic man and most learned in the law, 'one mighty in the Scriptures,' is taught by Aquila and Priscilla, and they expound to him the ways of the Lord.[1] Hence, if it be not an ancient thing, nor undue in an apostle to allow himself to be taught by women, why should it not be permissible in me, after having taught many men, to teach women also?"

The same strain does he follow in the prologue to Sophonias, and says: "Before I comment on Sophonias, who is the ninth among the twelve prophets, it becomes imperative for me to reply to those who judge me worthy of scorn, because, putting aside the men, I write to women, and to you especially, O Paula and Eustochium! And did they but know that, when men kept silent, Holda and Deborah, both judge and prophetess, prophesied and overcame the enemies of Israel when Barak was cowardly; that Judith and Esther, as figures of the Church, cut the heads off their enemies, and delivered Israel from peril, they would not lash thus my back. I speak not of Anna, Elizabeth, and other holy women, who are cast into the shade by the greater resplendency of Mary, as the stars pale before the greater light of the sun. Let us approach the Gentile women, in order that in the age of philosophers they should learn that difference of body is not what is sought for, but of soul. Plato in his *Dialogues* introduces Aspasia. Sappho is found to have collaborated with Pindar, and in Alcæus we see Themista, who philosophises with the most grave men of Greece, and Cornelia, of the family of the Gracchi and your own, whom the whole of Rome praises and celebrates. Carneades, a learned philosopher and rhetorician of great elegance, who moved all Greece to applause, did not disdain to dispute on a

[1] Acts xviii.

special case with only one matron. Why speak of Portia, daughter of Cato, wife of Brutus, whose courage is a good reason that we should not be astonished at that of her father and husband? Greek and Roman history is full of all this, and even whole books. It suffices to me to say at the end of this prologue (since I wish to come to the work of expounding) that at the resurrection of our Lord He first appeared to the women, thus making them apostles of His apostles, in order that men should be humbled and ashamed of not seeking for what the women had already found.

With these last words does our saint draw attention to the indifference and negligence of the men of his day, and well does he make known his desire of communicating these mysteries to his fellowmen, who might thereby teach other men in their turn; but there were none to partake of that desire, and, what is more astonishing, is to see that no one seemed inclined to learn Hebrew or Greek or, as regards the study of the sacred Scriptures, to be a disciple, but only these saintly women, who delighted in knowing them, and for that object took trouble to learn these languages, and I believe that the saint himself felt great pleasure in this study, as he praises such as took this trouble, not only for the great fruit which he drew from it, on account of the great secrets which were revealed, but he even enjoyed the construction and beauty of the languages.

During the time that Jerome remained in Rome, which, as we shall see farther on, did not exceed three years, he sent for his brother Paulinian, who was very young, having been born at the time Jerome was in Syria. We know not if he sent for him on account of the death of his parents. The saint does not say it, although it is believed it was for that reason. On the

arrival of the lad, he undertook his education. Jerome was to him brother, father, tutor, and master. He taught him grammar and Latin, I believe Greek also, the one being of use in learning the other, and our great doctor well knew how it ought to be taught. Paulinian soon manifested good qualities and talents, while the boon of having so good a master quickly developed his mind, as we shall see farther on, because, while still a very young man, St. Epiphanius ordained him priest on account of his virtues and letters. This dignity of priest was held in higher esteem then than at present, and demanded greater merits. Of this we shall treat more extensively in its proper place.

DISCOURSE THE EIGHTH

St. Jerome is persecuted in Rome. False Testimonies raised against him. Quits Rome for the Holy Land.

It is quite the usual thing in the world for saintly men to be persecuted. It has been, as it were, agreed between God and His servants on one part, and the devil and his own on the other part, that the latter should persecute the former; that the good should suffer and be tortured, that the wicked should exercise upon them their malice, and that as long as they live in the world these should triumph, the others weep, and that after a short time all things be reversed. Let the wicked now raise up false testimonies, crushing them with affronts; let them be cast into prisons, exiled, covered with miseries as by a mantle; let them be loaded with all the misfortunes that can be devised, until they end this life by a sad death; all, all will be in the end the fulfilment of the arrangement assented to very long ago between the ancient serpent and man:[1] "*She shalt crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*" There is no need to fill pages with examples. It suffices for my purpose to say that no one can meditate on the life of any saintly man without discovering something of this, and in many of them a great deal; indeed this fact has come to be so widely acknow-

[1] Genesis iii. 15.

ledged that we ourselves do not hold a saint to be so who does not pass through all this. I will only refer to what the Catholic Queen, Doña Isabel (of whose memory Spain rejoices), that when she witnessed the persecutions and false testimonies which were raised against the holy Archbishop of Granada, Fray Hernando de Talavera, of the Order of St. Jerome, the first archbishop nominated by her, she exclaimed: "*This indeed is what was wanting to my father for him to be a saint!*"

The Queen indeed had always held him to be a saint, yet she had not seen him under trials; she had judged his sanctity to be solid, and when she saw him tried she was confirmed and certified in her judgment.

And in order that this should not be wanting to Jerome, and so that he should go through all this and even have something left to give others for their instruction, it will be well to understand that the enemy would not treat Jerome more gently in Rome than he had done formerly in the desert. And as he himself expresses it, whithersoever he might go, and wherever he was placed, whether he changed places or not, he could not change his adversary. In return for the great labours he had gone through to adorn that city and serve the Church, he could only expect and receive what men usually give. How could the devil rest or mitigate his fury, when Jerome was waging against him such a warfare? Many were there of the devil's band, who had become converted to a better life and joined the army of Christ on his account—some from the errors of idolatry to the faith; others from a slumbering faith and evil ways to a living faith and to good morals, due to Jerome's discourses, counsels, admonitions, doctrine, and example, by which they came to hate vice, to love sanctity, and thus quit their blindness, put aside their pleasures, lead retired

lives, penitential, monastic, and so forth, even such as were more delicately brought up. The adversary raged in his fury; and he would not be what he is, did he not strive to take revenge for so much damage and make up for so many losses; because one of two things was imperative —either Jerome and a great portion of the virtues and the advantages linked to souls should quit the city, or he (the evil one), with his great crowd of numberless and nameless vices, leave Rome, because Jerome, and the devil and his vices, despite the size of the city, could not remain there together. Such was the speed and the fervour with which the saint pursued and reprehended vice, that it became well-nigh insupportable.

The whole city in heart was divided on this case. For, although outwardly the opposing parties did not dare to open their mouths, and agreed together in secret, both those against and in favour of him agreed in saying that God had brought that man for the remedy of the city, and that after the days of Pope Damasus it was a recognised and established opinion that he would be called to occupy the chair of Peter. Nevertheless, within their hearts they were very much separated. Such as had never earnestly sought to amend their lives, but were given up to their vices, were very much on the side of the devil, and they felt Jerome's influence as much as he did.

They chafed and were hurt by the reprehensions of the saint, known and pointed at as wretched Christians, held in naught and almost denied speech by the good, who followed the mandate—*that with such as these not to break bread with them.* Among these marked ones were some bad priests, whose conversation and life the saint had well depicted in his epistle on *Virginity*, and whom he had reprehended in public with vivid words. These, together with the arch enemy, gave the warning note, and they

commenced business; at first and little by little they began to circulate with veiled words, uttered as though as a secret, a slight rumour, as bewailing and lamenting the fair fame of the holy man, in order to see how it would be received and believed: "What a pity should there be any truth in what is said in secret!" "There are reports that this man's life is not altogether what it should be. We are grieved to the soul that it should be so!" Furthermore, it was hinted that his wickedness was such that Jerome was persuading Paula and other matrons, who belonged to the highest nobility of the city, to go and live far away in the Holy Land, because by so doing he would become owner and master of their wealth and their property. In this way did they seek to defame the holy man in secret, and indeed not so very secretly; thus did they tear his life up in their fury.

At this juncture Pope Damasus died. God permitted that by this event His saint should be deprived of patron and protector, and alone, to face these hard trials. By the death of Damasus the enemies of Jerome remained masters of the field, with many paths open for their designs, because his presence alone prevented them from daring to break out in public against Jerome, both on account of the great friendship which existed between the pontiff and Jerome, who were like one soul, and because the holy pontiff had suffered similar affronts, and had had infamies laid at his charge by two wicked deacons, Concordius and Callistus. Without a shadow of doubt, Damasus, had he lived, would have taken up the case as his own, and this they had feared lest in them would be executed the law—not so strict as just—which had been passed in his own cause, that he who should falsely accuse another would be liable to the same penalty as the accused would have had to suffer had his guilt been proved. Meanwhile, as long as

Damasus lived, there had been only circulated some inquiries, some secret hints.

Damasus died, after governing and occupying the apostolic chair nineteen years with great sanctity, powerful example, much peace, after leaving arranged most holy things, to the augmentation of the divine worship, and without doubt he was one of the greatest saints and pontiffs who have occupied the Holy See. His death is fixed as having taken place in 384. Jerome at the time must have been in the forty-fourth year of his age, according to the most reliable accounts. This was the same year that St. Augustine entered Milan to teach rhetoric, he being then thirty years old, as appears from what he himself says in his *Confessions*, cap. xiii.

The next pontiff elected was Siricius, who at first was called Ursicinus or Ursinus—I believe he was first elected in competition with Pope Damasus. I have a suspicion that, whereas this pontiff was a simple man and easy going, occasion was taken by the rivals of the saint to publicly exhibit their malice. Although St. Jerome was with the Pope some days in Rome, I do not find that he mentions him in any noteworthy manner. Twice does he mention Siricius in the third part of the *Apologia against Rufinus*. In the Epistle on the epitaph of Marcella[1] he applies to him the term of *simple man*. He gives us to understand that Rufinus took advantage of his simplicity to introduce the errors of Origen into Rome, deceiving many of the clergy and laymen, and that he also deceived or scorned the simplicity of the bishop, this being understood of Siricius. Farther on he says that he was succeeded by Athanasius after a few years. At this time wicked men began to make public the malicious things which had been circulated in secret, and they advanced

[1] *Epist.* 16, c. 41.

wickedly against the sanctity of Jerome and Paula inventions such as might be expected from their evil hearts. They found a common man, who, for a small bribe and interest, brought forward accusations against them. The affair reached to such a pitch that, as it concerned persons of such high position and importance, this man was arrested. He was put to the torture to speak the truth, and as malice could not long be hidden away, he declared that all he had said and circulated in corners and conventicles was false and evil, and not a word of truth had he spoken. That they were both saintly persons, and he himself held them as saints.

But Jerome, on witnessing the great malice that had urged these men on, the spirit of his enemies so badly disposed in his regard, and feeling that such as had spread these falsehoods would still continue in their evil course, nor would they cease to persecute him, after mature consideration resolved upon quitting Rome. God also willed to draw His servant out of the tumult and bustle of the world, and that, whereas he had served Him in the general and public things of His Church, he in like manner should serve Him in other more especial ones, ever performing the office of doctor, and by these means to bring many others into His service. The holy doctor pondered in his mind on the quietude and solitude, and his yearning for the Holy Land, and the longings to dwell in the holy places were renewed in his heart.

Let us hear from him the narrative of the case and the malice hatched against him, which he depicts in vivid colouring in the Epistle which on board ship he wrote to Asella, before the anchor was raised and the sails unfurled.

"Jerome to Asella,[1] health. Did I wish to return you

[1] *Epist.* 99.

my thanks for what I owe you I would not know how. The Lord is powerful to repay you what for me personally you have done; I, being all unworthy, acknowledge that never could it have entered my mind that you should show me so much affection in Christ. And though many held me to be wicked and full of every vice, and all this, in respect to what my sins deserve, be little to bear, yet nevertheless you do well to hold as good what may be called bad. It is a dangerous thing to judge another's servant, and a difficult affair to obtain pardon for the evil which is said of the good. There will come, however, there will arise a day when you will sorrow with me, on beholding no small number burning in fierce flames. I am the perverse one, I am the evil one, I the astute, the double-tongued man, the deceiver, liar, and the one who with devilish arts makes mischief. Now I ask: Which is safest, to have believed, or assumed to believe, all this of those who are innocent, or not believe any of this of even such as are not good? Some would kiss my hands, and with the tongues of vipers would murmur at my actions; with the lips alone they sympathised in my misfortunes, yet in their hearts rejoiced that I suffered. The Lord saw them and laughed at them; and as to me, a poor servant of His, He guarded me, in order to decide my cause with them in judgment. Some would find fault with my manner of walking and my laughter; others criticised my diffidence and demeanour, and others again murmured at my sincerity and plain dealing, and formed imaginations and suspicions. For nearly three years did I dwell with them, and many came to converse and communicate with me; to many of these I declared the divine books as best I could. Let them speak up now; let them say whether they ever saw in me anything which was not allowable, or not in harmony with the life of a Christian? Did I ever receive money?

Whatsoever presents and gifts were offered me, whether large or small, did I not refuse them? Did their coins ever jingle in my hands?" and so on St. Jerome proceeds in this same strain, and at length concludes with these words: "They called me charmer and magician, and as a faithful servant I recognise these honoured titles, since my Lord also was called magician by the Jews, and the apostle a cheat, and with him I likewise say, *never may any temptation come to me but what is human.* And how small a share of trials is this which I now endure, I, who pride myself in being a soldier, and one who marches beneath the standard of Christ and of His Cross! The infamy of a false crime they laid to my charge; but I well know that through good or evil report must we reach the Kingdom of Heaven. Salute from me Paula and Eustochium, mine in Christ, whether the world wishes it or not. Salute Mother Albina and Sister Marcella, and likewise Marcellina and Felicitas, and tell them that we shall all appear together before the tribunal of Christ, and there will be made manifest how each one has lived. Remember me, you who are an illustrious example of virginity and purity, and with your prayers mitigate the fury of the waves of the sea!"

Despite that men were so bitter against him, on account of his fearlessness, and the promptitude with which he reprehended those who led evil lives, yet when brought before his presence they deeply respected him, and they would even kiss his garments and hands. Thus do even come true the words of the wise man:[1] "*A man is known by his look, and a wise man, when thou meetest him, is known by his countenance. The attire of the body, and the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of the man, show what he is.*" Because, in the same way as the

[1] Ecclus. xix.

diseases are seen by outward means, which doctors call symptoms, and by which they are able to judge the height or kind of fever, and the gravity of the evil suffered, so also the virtue or the sickness of the soul appear in the eyes, the countenance, and face by certain signs, as being the registry or the channels through which anguish and desires are poured out. This philosophy is taught us by St. Augustine, where he says that the eyes which are not pure are the messengers of the unchaste soul. And St. Gregory Nazianzen in his invectives against Julian the Apostate, says that from the signs of his looks, his walk, and attire, he at once perceived the great wickedness which that wild beast concealed within. And it is in reason that the modesty of demeanour and behaviour of our great Jerome should always be represented to our eyes, and that we should not cease, as his sons, to imitate him, lest through our own fault and negligence we should make void the Spanish proverb or saying, applied to any one who being calm, recollected, and modest in his walk and demeanour, "*he walks like a Jerome.*"

There is one thing, among a hundred others in this Epistle, worthy of deep consideration for those who find themselves attacked by false testimonies and affronts, that the devil endeavours with all his powers then to induce them to depart from following the paths commenced, and to this purpose he directs all his wiles, more especially when it be a good work which is being carried out and likely to increase; and for the same reason a great resistance and firmness is required. This is very well taught us in this letter. There was perceived an admirable constancy in St. Jerome, a grand heart raised loftily above all those schemes, and master of them; and there is also another thing to be learned by it—not to make much of any present trouble, but to set the eye and the aim on what is eternal,

and where there exists another tribunal set in justice, where, without respect of persons or deceit of any kind, causes are examined, and where neither favour avails, nor power, nor even malice, but only rectitude and cleanness of heart, and the good works which may accompany the soul. It is also worthy of being kept in mind, since it is the sole consolation of the good, that oftentimes the murmurs of the bad and the evil eye, directed against them, spring from the fact that, as they perceive that others are praised and esteemed by reason of their virtues, while they themselves, on account of their wretched lives and intercourse, are detested and held in disesteem, no confidence placed in their person in any one thing, they take as a means (when they dare not rise up to where the good are) to try and bring them down to their own level, either by speaking ill of their lives, defaming them, scorning their ways, raising up against them false testimonies, and by dissuading them—when they can do no more—from following the path of rectitude. This they do, because it would be a great solace to their rage and envy that there should exist no good persons, nor any one signal in virtue, who should react as a note and correction on their own lives, but that all should pursue the one road they follow, lost and undone; thus they would not be known, nor the others judged superior to themselves. Against all this, he, who would assume to be a servant of God, must oppose a bold front, with the heart of a Jerome, and laugh at them, saying: "Brother, walk wherever you may wish, and leave me alone! If you hold him to be a fool or hapless, who journeys along the road of roughness, and the narrow path, which leads to life, and who strives to enter in by the still narrower gate, which is that of penance, I hold you to be far more miserable and bereft of judgment who walk along the wide highway, which you call level, by which many

journey on to death. If you hold me to be a fool because I do violence to my flesh and to my senses, and deprive myself of what this body of sin craves, and the law of sensuality, I on my part judge you deficient of sense, in that you do not hear the voice of the Saviour, who says that from the days of St. John the Baptist (that is to say, since the preaching of penance) the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and is conquered, and that it is the violent who carry it away."

In a word, from this letter is clearly gathered the condition and conversation of the world, and the nature of the same. Who that saw St. Jerome, when he entered into Rome, received with so much applause, and who was so greatly desired, of such high repute as we have shown, who worked things of such great utility in the Church things which none other ever had done, and within the short space of three years, during which he laboured so indefatigably in the city, did such incredible work, now sees him as he is about to leave that city! Affronted, dishonoured, persecuted, scorned, he must needs consider his honour and write the letter he did. Oh, great Doctor of the Church! It was well that this should happen thus. You used oftentimes to say: "*The disciple is not greater than the Master!* And whereas you take glory in being servant of Jesus Christ, bear in mind with what glory and applause He was received in Jerusalem shortly before the Passover, and in what a manner he came forth out of Jerusalem."

And well does the saint manifest to us that the above thought was not far from the mind, since he himself says that he returns infinite thanks to His Divine Majesty for making him worthy of the world's hatred. And the reader who will continue considering the course of the life of this great doctor, will find that he is great in everything, in

being persecuted, murmured at, and calumniated; most great, because the devil took up as an undertaking to cast him down, and to oppose him and to make war on him, because the saint was himself waging a fierce war on him. We have already seen what passed in the desert: how he suffered grievous sickness in the body, terrible and continued temptations in the soul; on one side the heretics, and so that there should be no part of him without being fatigued, in return for the benefits he worked in Rome he is dismissed, and he bids farewell to the city in the manner we have seen him do. But why marvel at this? For he himself besought these trials of his Lord, and he desired them, because, being the wise person he was, he fully comprehended the interest that accrues from this manner of trials and persecutions, and which answers to the sum and esteem at which the same Lord Himself values them (who permits them) and gives in return that which is a hundredfold.

Let us hear what St. Jerome says in the closing words of his *Commentaries on Sophonias*:—

"Oh, Lord Jesus Christ! give me to be oppressed, afflicted, crushed, and repulsed in this age, so that Thou mayest receive me and set me in glory."

These are the concluding words of an excellent discourse which, for the consolation of the afflicted, Jerome had written on the words of the prophet, in which God, speaking to Jerusalem, says (according to the translation of the Septuagint): "*Behold, I will do in thee and for thee in those days, and will save the crushed, and receive in me the forsaken, and will place them* (He means His sons) *in glory, and will name them in all the earth.*" The sense of this, says the saintly doctor, is as follows: "I shall save her, who in this present life should be crushed and oppressed, like the olive and the grape, under the beam

of the wine-press and the screw of the oil-mill, in order to bring forth the oil and the wine, and of this wine Jesus Christ shall drink in the kingdom of His Father, and with the oil be anointed above all his companions and brethren. And from the distillation of this pressing and of this ointment it strikes me Job suffered so many things, that, being well bruised and yielding these liquors and these juices, he heard these words from the Lord: '*Dost thou think, forsooth, that the cause was none other for my having thus replied, but in order that thy justice may be made manifest?*' As though to the olive and to the vine their master should speak and say: 'Do you believe that I have thus crushed you for any other reason but that you might yield up the wine and the oil which you have within you?'" This is of the saint, and full worthy of being kept in remembrance, together with many other things which he adds there, drawn from the book of his experience, which applies to him equally well as to holy Job. We could well ask him the same question, and conclude with him in the same words as he ends a little farther on: "They will be confounded, oh saint! your adversaries and such as presumed to affront you; the day will come when the wicked and those who are called powerful in this world shall see with their own eyes that those whom they considered unfortunate and miserable are now enjoying felicity, and placed in the highest glory and wealth are those whom they contemned as being in poverty, and also will they see to their grief those who in dire servitude and miserable captivity had been set in this exile under their empire changed into the liberty of the celestial Jerusalem, and they themselves rising up, not for a similar glory, but for eternal misery and confusion." Up to this all is Jerome's speech, and very much his, since it so well fits him.

God revealed to his soul the success of his affairs; for of his rivals and adversaries there scarcely remain any other memories but what Jerome records of them, while he himself lives gloriously in the heavens above, and here below on earth in the memory of all men and in the annals of the undying Church of God.

DISCOURSE THE NINTH

The Journey of St. Jerome from Rome to the Holy Land

Jerome departed from Rome, or, in his own words, he left Babylon and the world for a second time. He left that city enriched by a thousand things drawn from the mine of his intelligence. And in return for these good works he received what the world usually gives, for, even if it would, it could give nothing better—that is to say, persecutions and affronts. This time he did not go alone, nor indeed did he go alone the first time; but now he proceeds accompanied by his brother Paulinian, a youth of great promise. He takes also with him Vincentius, a priest, and he is followed by a further holy company of monks, who had gathered around him when in Rome. These had resorted to that city by the fame of his name, his sanctity and letters, as did all those who wished to profit by these things, coming from Italy, France, and other parts, he teaching them what they wanted to know, and in truth they learned much. They had not fared so badly in his company that they should wish to separate themselves from him, therefore they accompanied him in this important journey, nor did they wish to leave him until they should reach Bethlehem, where there they persevered in the holy manner of life, which they were constantly learning from him. Many other persons

followed and went forth with Jerome. These, indeed, were the spoils with which he left triumphantly the ungrateful city; for they had been, and were, the witnesses both of his great virtues and the accusers of her great disloyalty.

But a very different journey did he make now from Rome to the Holy Land than he had done the first time, because, as we have seen, the first was by land, this one by sea, so that there should be no trouble left untasted by our saint, and he should thus be able to say with St. Paul, that he suffered trials by water and by land, from false brethren, in the desert, and in the cities. It was in the month of August that, leaving the capital of the Roman Church enriched by far more precious treasures than the Emperor from whom the month derived its name had increased it by the spoils of Egypt and of Asia, our new Augustus arrived at the port of Ostia, which was called the Roman Port, and there took ship with all the company we have stated, leaving behind many others, sad and tearful at his departure, and others also who were both on foot and on horse ready to follow. Yet there were others, again, who were full of joy at finding themselves delivered of a censor who to their mind was so outspoken, because it is ever a sting to the evil-doers to have the presence of the good, and they are harassed by the very sight of them. When he embarked, he wrote the letter we have already mentioned. The winds carried the ship to the part of Italy called Reggio in those days, by which some have affirmed the island of Sicily is reached. From thence he proceeded below the Peloponnesus, which now is called Morea, where once stood the celebrated city of Sparta; at the present time parts of its walls are still in existence, as also the fame of the Lacedæmonians. The course of this voyage is found in detail, written by the holy doctor him-

self, in the *Apologia contra Rufinum*[1]—to Antioch, and from Antioch to Jerusalem, enduring great cold, for it was mid-winter.

He tells us in this description of the many fables concerning the ancients and their origin; the songs of the sirens and the gorges and caverns celebrated by the ancient poets, all which may be perused by such as wish. From what relates to the purpose of the journey we may gather that the trials and dangers from unkind murmurs did not arrest his voyage, nor caves of Scylla, nor the ambition of Charybdis; neither is he detained by the flatteries and sweet songs of sensuality and pleasure of the Sirens, nor was he deceived by the artifices and falseness of the vices of the flesh, nor the malice of evil-intentioned men; nor is he ruled by prosperous or adverse fortune, friends or enemies, the applause of the world nor its false intercourse, nor by the great city, nor the honourable offices and charges, nor false testimonies, nor false brethren, nor all the perils of the course of this life were ever able to detain, separate, trouble, or deter him from following his aim—the firmly determined purpose of seeking God, and of loving him with all his powers. Our doctor tells us that on arriving at Cyprus he was received with great joy by St. Epiphanius, whose testimony and credit Rufinus had greatly appreciated before he became so well known. The saintly prelate was overjoyed at his presence; to him Jerome gave a lengthy account of all that he had gone through in Rome, and signified to him that his desire was to live in the Holy Land, and, if possible, in the cave at Bethlehem. The two saints became great friends; their souls manifested the zeal which they had for the Christian religion, the opposition and enmity of the heretics, the similarity of their cus-

[1] *Apolog. in Rufin.* lib. iii. c. 7.

toms and desires and aims being such that perforce the affection between them increased. All this is clearly apparent in many places in the writings of both, and in the Apologiæ of our doctor against Rufinus more especially, and the same against John of Jerusalem, where he defends himself against both very earnestly. After resting here some time he proceeded on his journey, going from Cyprus to Antioch, where he was received in like manner by the saintly Bishop Paulinus with no less joy than he had been by Epiphanius. In truth Paulinus owed much to St. Jerome, both for having given him a good character in the east with all the faithful, because, when it was seen that St. Jerome, a man of such learning and sanctity, so great an enemy of the Arians, communicated with him, all men felt assured of his faith and held him to be a true Catholic and saint (which in truth he was), and also because in Rome, in regard to Pope Damasus, his friendship had been of great importance to him, and thus he had come confirmed in the Bishopric by the Apostolic See, an act which the Pope would not do in regard to Meletius, who, although he was truly a Catholic and of great sanctity, since he merited that both the luminaries of the Greek Church, Basil and Nazianzen, should laud him with signal praises for his sanctity, yet as he had been elected and brought by the Arians from Armenia, he did not wish to show him much favour, and this is the whole reason given by Theodoretus for the disfavour of Meletius shown by the Pope. In those days things were very disturbed, and more especially was this the case in regard to that Church of Antioch; even the Arians themselves accused Meletius of being a Sabellian, despite that this heresy was so opposed to their own. And Theodoretus[1] himself says that the persecution of

[1] *Theod.* lib. iii. c. 5; lib. v. c. 3.

the Arians against the good Meletius was such that they cast him from the bishopric.[1] It was a scheme of the Arians in those days when they saw any man distinguishing himself in letters or sanctity, and that he was going against the sect, to say of him that he was a heretic, pointing him out as an Origenist, or a Sabellian, or Nestorian. In this way they accused Paulinus of being a Sabellian, and even Jerome, as we said before. This was the journey of our doctor from Ostia, along the whole Mediterranean, to Sicily and the Peloponnesus, Cyprus, and Antioch. Jerome remained in Antioch some days. The contentions and disturbances among the prelates were as great as ever, and continued for many years, the heretics fanning the flame (for it suits them to have no peace). Jerome quitted Antioch accompanied by his friend Paulinus, and with so good a companion he reached Jerusalem, despite that others understand it otherwise. The words of the saint are these: "From Cyprus I came to Antioch, where I enjoyed the conversation of the saintly pontiff and confessor Paulinus, and being guided by him we went down in the midst of the winter and its bitter cold from Antioch to Jerusalem. On entering the latter place I saw strange marvels, and what I had known only by repute I now saw with my eyes."

It must have been about the Epiphany, since he says it was mid-winter, when, guided by his good star, Jerome entered to adore Jesus in those holy places consecrated by His footprints, and in the wide chalice of his great heart there would not be wanting the mystic gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. The saintly doctor declares that he saw with his own eyes miracles of which he had only heard by repute. I do not know what these miracles were which he witnessed, nor what extraordinary events to which the

[1] *Tripart.* lib. v. c. 48.

saint applies this name. I surmise that he speaks of the eyes which faith places in the soul, and that all those places which the holy Scriptures mention as having been visited by our Only Good were patent to his view, represented so vividly that the eyes of the body were superfluous. Oh, Divine Goodness! What burning sighs must he have exhaled from his breast! What sweet tears must have trickled down from his eyes to his lips, and what words must he have uttered so burning from the furnace of his mind! What conceptions, what motives, what pregnant thoughts must have been awakened by those marvellous memories! How he must have counted the footsteps taken for our salvation by our Saviour and our Life, and how he must have wept for those taken in vain for us! Methinks I see Jerome kissing the ground, the stones, the walls—now on his knees, now prostrated, barefoot, standing, adoring the places where His divine feet had passed. Who can but be fired with wrath, or grieved at the blindness of so many heretics, old and new, who, loth to leave anything in the Church without being soiled, have wagged their tongues against holy pilgrimages and visits to the holy places, scorning them as fruitless, and not satisfied with qualifying them as a thing impious and irreligious, but even add that it be sheer idolatry! They manifest hatred towards all that can awaken and open a path to the love of the things of God and of His saints.

I have proposed in this history not to treat upon common places, nor dispute holy dogmas, but simply to follow the office of historian, and defend the things that touch the glory and honour of this saint; hence I will not linger in the defence, against these censors, of holy pilgrimages made by pious and devout souls. All this has been examined by many learned men and investigated

to the very fount and defended convincingly. Hence I will only state that it will not be outside my purpose to defend my saint and patron against them, proving that pilgrimages are not things to be laughed at, nor idolatrous, as they blasphemously call them, but works of very high merit. Because if there is one saint in the Church whom these reasons and affronts more deeply touch, it is Jerome, both on account of the many pilgrimages he performed from his boyhood, when, as we have already seen, he visited the sepulchres of the martyrs, as also by reason of the many persons he persuaded to make them from various parts of the world to the Holy Land, from Spain, France, Italy, Germany, and Africa.

Let us, then, hear from his own lips what he says and feels in his soul in regard to these holy visits, where he writes a description of his journey with St. Paula and others to the holy places:[1] "On coming to Bethlehem and entering the small cave of the Saviour, on beholding the inn and hostel of the Blessed Virgin, the stable where the ox knew the Lord and the ass the crib of its master, in order that thereby should be fulfilled what was prophesied by Isaiah,[2] *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters, sending thither the foot of the ox and the ass.* The holy matron would oftentimes declare to me that with the eyes of faith she could see the Infant in swaddling clothes and the Infinite Lord weeping in the crib; that she beheld the angels entering to adore Him, and the brilliant star shining over the little house; she would see the Virgin Mother, the careful guardian, and the shepherds coming in at night, and the magi entering in to adore. Like manna were represented to her the murdered innocents, Herod enraged and furious, Joseph and Mary flying into Egypt, and weeping copious tears sprung from joy and

[1] *Epist.* 27. [2] Isaiah xxxii. 20.

emotion, she would cry out, *Hail Bethlehem! House of Bread! where that bread was born which descended from heaven! Hail Euphrates! most fertile region, fruit producing, abundant in harvests, whose fulness is God!*" All these sentiments does our saint employ when depicting what came forth from the heart of the holy matron at beholding these sacred places.

In the Epistle to Marcella the saint treats of all this with much tenderness and eloquence, inviting her to come to the Holy Land, replying to all the objections and difficulties which Marcella should urge against doing so. Many are the praises poured upon the dwelling of Jerusalem for various reasons. It is said Adam lived and died there, and was, so it is affirmed, buried in the same place where Jesus Christ was crucified, so that the blood which flowed from the Second Adam should wash away the sin committed on the tree of Paradise. Also, because many prophets had lived there, and the names of Jebus, Salem, and Jerusalem are the symbols of the Trinity, and many other arguments and pious reasons, by which he declares its grandeur. Marcella replies (so he assumes) that all this is true, and could be well applied to those times when God loved the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob, and its foundations were upon the high mountains; but that after they crucified on it the Lord of the world, and it became contaminated by so horrible a crime as the spilling of His blood and that of the apostles and other servants of God, it justly remained cursed and forsaken by the divine grace; and that Josephus, the historian of the place, mentions that voices were heard in the Temple before the coming of Titus to destroy it, which said, "Let us pass on from this place to other dwellings." To this Jerome replies that all this was done in hatred and punishment of the ungrateful Israelitish

people, but not in hatred or punishment of the city and land; and that if it was destroyed, it was because of the inhabitants; the Temple fell in order that its sacrifices should cease; and that if we consider and view the spot in itself and the city, we shall find them more noble and grander than they had been before. The Jews formerly honoured the holy of holies by reason of its cherubim, for its table of propitiation, the ark of the Testament, the vessel of manna, the rod of Aaron, the table and altar of gold; and does not this seem to you more worthy of reverence, the sepulchre of the Lord? As often as we enter in, so often is represented to us the Saviour enveloped in the winding-sheet; and on lingering a while there rises up at the foot of the sepulchre the angel seated, and at the head the cloths drawn together. And long before this sepulchre had been made by Joseph it had been praised by Isaiah manifesting its majesty by saying, "And it will be the place of his rest, honour, and glory, because it was to be the sepulchre of the Lord, ordered by all." After bringing forward many things to this purpose, he utters a sentence well worthy of such high judgment: "Throughout the world we reverence the sepulchres of the martyrs, and their holy ashes we place on our eyes, and, if allowed, we kiss and touch lovingly with our lips; and the sepulchre where our Lord was laid, how can any one think it be so lightly esteemed? If we disbelieve men, let us at least believe the devil himself and his wicked angels, because each time that they come in presence of this holy sepulchre they rush out of the bodies they had taken possession of, they tremble, fume, and writhe as though they were at the bar and tribunal of Jesus Christ, and they repent, when too late, of having crucified Him whom they now fear so greatly." Why then do they not read this paragraph, those evil censors

of pilgrimages, and such as scorn the holy places and the relics and ashes of the martyrs? If Jerome be in their regard of any authority, let them read this part and put aside their ignorance—unless malice has hardened their hearts into stone.

Here it strikes me that I perceive the miracles which our saint implies he witnessed on entering into Jerusalem; and many other marvels must have taken place there which our saintly doctor does not mention, no doubt because they did not come to the purpose, or possibly because they were notorious and well known. The same does he tell us occurred at the sepulchre of St. John the Baptist,[1] for in the *Epitaph of St. Paula* he says as follows: "Proceeding farther on, she saw the sepulchre of the twelve prophets and the city of Sebaste, which is Samaria, and now is called Augusta, its name having been changed in honour of Augustus, at which place lie buried Eliseus and Abdias, and he who among those born of woman had no superior, that is to say, St. John the Baptist, where she was struck with astonishment at the prodigies she witnessed there. In her very presence she saw with her eyes, and heard with her ears, the devils roaring under the torture of divers torments, and in sight of the sepulchre men possessed by evil spirits howled like wolves, barked like dogs, roared like lions, hissed like serpents, and bellowed like bulls. Some would so twist their heads that they touched their backs on the ground; others performed strange contortions. Paula compassionated them all, prayed for them, weeping tender tears."

From all this is sufficiently proved our proposition, and our Christian Cicero has well manifested to us the great power, not only natural, but heavenly and divine, which the holy places possess, to move us and awaken

[1] *Epist.* 27, c. 6.

souls to the love of celestial things, to urge us to the imitation of the lives of those who dwelt there, to similar desires of perfection and amendment of life.[1] Pilgrimages are not made in vain, when undertaken with recollection and piety; for although our holy doctor by words and example encouraged pilgrimages, yet dissuades Paulinus, the Monk, from performing them, because for his institute it was more appropriate to keep quiet and retired. It is not always advisable to such, whose lives are vowed to silence and retirement, for it is not good for the monk and the nun and other religious to come and go, and lose that quietude, recollection, solitude, and repose which is their state. Hence we have the examples of St. Anthony and St. Hilarius, who, although living in Palestine, yet only once did they see Jerusalem, and this was done to manifest that it was a holy thing to visit the holy places.

[1] Concil. *Kabylonense sub Carolo Magn.* cant. 45; Trident August, *Epist.* 137; Beda, lib. v. Hist. c. 7; Socrates, lib. vii.; Cassianus, lib. iv., *De institutis renuntian*; Sulpicius, lib. ii. Hist.

DISCOURSE THE TENTH

St. Jerome goes from Jerusalem to Egypt. Proceeds to the Deserts of Nitria. Visits the holy monks dwelling there. Paula arrives at Bethlehem.

When St. Jerome had enjoyed to the full the holy places, his soul refreshed, his heart full of joy by the sweet recollections of our Saviour and Lord, of His holy mother, of the saintly apostles and prophets, his friend Paulinus bade him farewell, and returned to his church at Antioch, in order no longer to be absent from the flock which had been entrusted to his care.

Our doctor, with the desire of the monastic life ever before him and impressed in his soul, decided to undertake the very difficult journey to Egypt. He even wished in this to be like his Master, Who, although not flying from Herod, yet he was flying away as far as he could from the world. This he himself states in the *Apologia against Rufinus*,[1] where he says: "From Jerusalem I took the road to Egypt, and proceeded to visit the monasteries of Nitria, and among the choirs of holy monks I saw that there dwelt also poisonous asps."

We cannot desist from admiring the enthusiasm of this great father and the desire of finding Christian perfection; wherever he deems he may find it, there does he journey;

[1] Lib. 3, cap. 7.

he does not mind the perils of the seas or of wild lands, peoples, deserts, beasts or men. Egypt in those days was a great school of sanctity, as in other times it had been of errors. Within those deserts there had come to dwell many men of singular perfection, of so powerful an influence that their example sufficed to people those wilds. Those two brave captains of this army of sanctity, Anthony and Paul, the one silently, the other by the force of his exhortations, raised the flag, opened the road, chased away fear, facilitating what appeared on all counts impossible for man's power to accomplish. Jerome, by the truth of his deeds, conquered the most absurd and monstrous fictions of the Greeks. It did not seem to our saintly monk that he could boast of such a name, unless for some days at least he studied at that school, practising and experiencing in himself the rule of life followed. He would cross those deserts frightful to men of little faith, but which were more lovely to his eyes than the gardens of Italy and Athens. He sought out the monks hidden in caves, ignored of men, but not of the angels nor of God, with whom they solely conversed. Some he would find in the depths of caves, others in valleys even deeper, others again on rough rugged mountains, this one in an old cistern, another in a ruined house, in miserable huts, in the hollow of decayed trunks of oak and cork trees; but one and all leading lives of angels, whence they would ascend in countless numbers, freed from the trammels of their bodies, to the mansions of heaven. All these treasures did the insatiable holy cupidity of this discoverer of precious things find; he overcame the difficulties of the roads, the roughness of the various lands, bad passes; he would scramble up the rocks, he would hang over precipices and make perilous descents, he feared neither wild beasts nor poisonous reptiles, nor

did he care much to lose his life, who hoped to find it in death. Nothing frightened him, however arduous or monstrous it might be, since he that loves is not daunted by any difficulty. At times he found himself in such narrow passes that he could neither go forward, nor did it appear honourable to turn back; his shoes broken to pieces by the sharp, rough stones, hence he had to proceed barefooted, but he himself was very joyous, as though he were journeying on to behold that bush which burned without becoming consumed, and, judging that the spot and land was holy, he followed on to witness those lives of saints. For the sake of enjoying for a short time the conversation of a servant of God, all things appeared small in comparison by reason of the great love he had for this intercourse. It also seemed to him, when he met one of these solitaries, that it was the pearl which the gospel speaks of that was hidden in the fields, and that to obtain it, it were little to give the shoes off his feet—and even the very blood of those feet. The holy doctor mentions some of these men in his Epistles and treatises. In the Epistle which he wrote to Eustochium on *Virginity*, he describes the variety and difference of monks existing in Egypt as we have said: Cœnobites, who live in community; Remobites, which live in twos and twos or in threes and threes; Anchorites, who dwell alone in the deserts. Of these, he says, that, though they live in the flesh, they live not a life of flesh, but of the spirit, and promises to demonstrate their manner of life in another part, when occasion offers itself.

St. Jerome does not inform us what road he took from Jerusalem to Egypt. It would not have been easy for him to do so, because as he traversed mountains and valleys and ranges of hills, where never by any chance man had passed, it could not be stated, and even had it been

stated, it would not have been found again. I surmise he must have followed the track taken by the sons of Israel, when they came from Egypt to Canaan and the Promised Land, for whereas he was to be not only master of monks and hermits, but also doctor of the Church, God guided him in this path, in order he should see all those dwelling-places they made, the mansions wherein God's people were sheltered in those deserts for forty years, being supported by faith in His word, sending down to them the bread and the meat from heaven; this surmise I base on that divine epistle which he wrote to the saintly Fabiola, because in life he had promised it to her.[1] In this Epistle he reveals the secret and the spirit of what he witnessed with the eyes of the body; and, with a genius worthy of Jerome, declares with a continuous running allegory the whole journey. Well pleased would I be to linger discovering some part of this discourse, which Jerome proceeds making in these mansions and stopping-places, both because it would be of much profit to the soul, as for the great pleasure its narrative would afford, as also to investigate with great diligence this road, so as to make it known for good; forasmuch as there are many opinions respecting it, and it is not easy to decide the point. It is history that I am writing (although it is of a doctor of the Church), and therefore I dare not extend my work beyond what touches upon the doctrine and defence of the saint;[2] therefore, for the time being, let this remain in doubt, while I myself must continue without knowing through what route our doctor made the journey from Jerusalem to Egypt, because whereas he does not mention finding himself in any of these mansions, this silence gives me to understand that he proceeded by the common road. Of this journey he speaks in the epitaph of St. Paula. I am

[1] *Epist.* 127.

[2] *Vide* Hispaniam Goropii.

also doubtful whether this journey was distinct from the first. I mean to say, if he went first with only his companions, and subsequently went again, and with Paula, or went but once, and then in her company also. I myself believe he went twice, and that in the second journey Paula went also. The journey was made across those sandy, deserted places, and *uninhabitable*, which lie between the Sea of Syria and the Red Sea (Mare Rubrum). The land between these is called the field of Etham. From thence they went to the fields of Gessen, where stood the city of Rameses; the Hebrew word *gasam* means *pluvia* and *rain*, hence land of Gessen sounds like *land of rain.* These fields of Gessen lie in the lower part of Egypt, at the mouth of the river Nile, which is called *Pelusium*, and reaches to the Red Sea, and whereas here it rains, and not over the rest of Egypt, the land adopted the name *pluvia.* And it is the place where the patriarch Joseph received and housed his father Jacob and his brothers, and gave them possessions wherein to live, forasmuch as it was good ground for their herds. It is divided from the rest of Egypt at the part which on passing the Nile looks towards the land of Canaan. Here is the city of Rameses, which name, if divided into parts, means the tribute which is given to kings on what is pastured there.

I am well aware that our saintly doctor gives another interpretation to this name, and means *tronido de gozo*, a thunderclap of joy, while others say it signifies *turbulent movement* (movimiento turbulento), and draws many holy allegories from either interpretation. The saint says, previous to the above words, that the holy matron St. Paula came to the river of Egypt, *Sior*, and writers agree that this is the Nile, and the same called in holy Scriptures Sichor and Phison. He further says that after passing the land of Gessen and the fields of Tanis, where God had

worked such marvels, and the city of Noph, afterwards called Alexandria, and the town of God, Nitria, where with the salt and chalk of the virtues are daily washed the stains of many. He here calls Nitria *City of the Lord*: declaring the reason, alluding to the name of *nitre*, saltpetre or salitre, which has the virtue and power of cleaning stains on cloth, like soap and lye. And whereas that city had been newly converted to the faith, and by the blood of Christ being recently poured upon its inhabitants great virtues were practised and much penance done, he, with good reason, called it the *Town of the Lord*. To these holy practices many holy fathers and monks resorted who were dwelling there, as well as from the neighbouring desert. A huge tract of land is occupied by great deserts reaching to the confines of Ethiopia and Mauritania. In these there is a large wood, which is called of Nitria, between which and the city of Alexandria there stands a lake called *Moeris*. In this wood, as our saint states, there dwelt a large number and diversity of monks: it is said over five thousand in number. The observance of rules, rigour, roughness, and perfection of life followed was admirable. Prodigious things are related of them, and their deeds are the themes of many authors of the time. Among other high perfections and heroic virtues strict poverty outshone; they possessed not one thing, be it small or large, which was not examined by the hands of the superior. In brief words he praises the sanctity of these servants of God, as far as it could be enhanced, in the last phrases we have quoted above in the *Apologia contra Rufinus*, for he had seen with his own eyes in this visit which he made that the asps dwelt amid the choirs of the monks. I put aside the allegory, which here works against Rufinus, observing that some of these monks were Origenists. The asp is a venomous serpent, and, as

Œlian says,[1] despite that there are many varieties, yet all have so deadly a venom that their sting causes instant death, and the last remedy is sharply to cut off the part bitten. Notwithstanding this fact these deadly reptiles preserved such peace with these holy men, or better said, angels, that they followed the monks to the choir and lived together with them; so great was their sanctity, so firm their faith and confidence; thus verifying to the letter what Isaias says[2] would be witnessed in the blessed times of the gospel, that the child should confidently place its hand in the nest of the asp; and the suckling child should play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall thrust his hand into the den of the basilisk. Here it comes to the purpose to relate what Palladius in his History says in regard to a young monk, who, meeting one of these reptiles, fearlessly took it up and carried it to the monastery, thus showing the obedience tendered by all things to the servants of God, and how all are subject, and give the tribute of obedience which is due to them, by natural right, if they themselves do not deny it to God, and the malice of sin does not give them liberty to rebel and make war. This also is referred by St. Nilus in the *Chapters on Prayer* as having occurred to many saints of those deserts. Of the Abbot Teon he says in Chapter CII. that being with other monks in the fields conversing on spiritual things (for this indeed was ever their conversation), there came two vipers under his feet, and he, as one who was safe, placed his feet on them, and without moving continued his discourse, and at its conclusion he showed them to the monks. The same is told of another holy man in Chapter CIII. that an asp came to his feet, when engaged in prayer, and he allowed it to continue there until his prayer was ended, and then, without

[1] Œlian, lib. 9, à cap. 20, usque 29.

[2] Isaias, xi. 8.

hurting or stinging the monk, it withdrew, because (as the saint here remarks) it was reasonable that he who loved his God more than himself, and risked his life rather than lose the respect due to God in prayer, in his turn should be respected by these poisonous animals, and they should abstain from inflicting harm upon such a being.

Many other examples of this kind did our Jerome witness among those celestial inhabitants of the woods and desert of Nitria. He studied the order and manner of their life, the perfection which by the lofty course of their state they had attained to, the advice and the warnings, and the watchfulness, which have to be followed and observed against vices, which are the devils and the enemies of the spiritual life; he kept them all in his mind in order to profit from them himself, and for the profit also of others; and though this stay of his among them was short, yet he never forgot the lessons he had heard and learned, for to such as have a great desire to advance a short time is of great value. Let the great Father Hilarion speak, since in only two months, which he attended the school and professed the discipleship of the great Abbot Anthony, he carried away so signally and well learned the order and the manner of the life followed by him in acquiring virtues, in vanquishing demons, and other holy exercises and advices, that the saint boasted having so good a disciple, calling him, with loving words, *his son*. Similarly can the holy men of Nitria glory in having had, although but for so short a time, such a disciple as Jerome. On concluding the narrative of his journey in the *Apologia*, he states that he returned with hastened speed to Bethlehem, because there he had his heart and his affections.

It is urged that after the departure of Jerome from Rome, the holy matron Paula soon followed, losing no time in her desire to dwell in the Holy Land. The

journey was quickly determined upon, and I believe Jerome had not yet passed from the island of Sicily, where he had sojourned for some time, before Paula overtook him. I gather this to have been the case from the words of the epitaph which he wrote at her death, where he gives the description of his journey and passage by sea, but the doctor does not say that they travelled together. Despite that this seems probable, yet they may have been two journeys, and Paula have gone, as it seems, a year later, although no doubt she followed the route taken by Jerome, more especially as her deep regard for St. Epiphanius and St. Paulinus, both having been guests at her house in Rome, must have been a sufficient reason for the journey to have been taken by the same route in order to visit these holy prelates.

Jerome and Paula were now to dwell in their greatly yearned-for Bethlehem. They chose that holy land for their only refuge, in order to pass with less turbulence the great waves of this life's ocean, so full of dangers.

At the present day there still remains at Bethlehem some vestiges of the chambers wherein lived St. Jerome and where he wrote. This dwelling is not far removed from the temple, close to the place where our Saviour was circumcised. And towards the south there appears a grotto, where many of the bodies of the holy Innocents were brought. Nicephoras and Eusebius say that St. Helena built there a church. Close to it there is a monastery of friars of St. Francis. Towards the east are seen vestiges of the sepulchres of St. Paula and her daughter, St. Eustochium.

Let us proceed to see what St. Jerome and St. Paula, each in their way, did after their arrival.

DISCOURSE THE ELEVENTH

St. Paula builds four Monasteries in Bethlehem, and St. Jerome one. He washes the Feet of the Pilgrims.

Saint Paula, on arriving at Bethlehem, burning with the desire of poverty as her rule of life rather than of necessity, enclosed herself in a small dwelling for three years. This we are told by her faithful witness, St. Jerome.[1] The fame of her great virtues and sanctity had spread to such an extent that from many parts young maidens of all conditions of life were flocking to be under her rule; hence it became necessary, in order to receive so large a company, to build three monasteries. These three monasteries, to my mind, were not separate buildings, but one large edifice divided into three sections. Paula also erected a fourth, a monastery for men, and besides these four a guest-house for the reception of the crowds of pilgrims which resorted there, from all parts of the world, to visit these holy places. The order followed by St. Paula in the government of these monasteries was very strict, and is given in detail by St. Jerome,[2] and may be read by such as wish to study more intimately the life of this heroic matron, Paula.

St. Jerome states, first, the number of monasteries erected by St. Paula as four, and a guest-house for pilgrims.

[1] *Epist.* 27. [2] *Ibid.* 10.

One of these monasteries she gave up to men, as well as its government, and some affirm that it was here that our glorious Father dwelt. From this is gathered that Paula was a very wealthy lady, for, despite that she left her daughters and son in Rome well provided for, she yet had sufficient left for her to undertake long voyages to Bethlehem and erect all these buildings. I do not find any proof of the truth of the statement that Jerome lived in the monastery for men built by Paula, although it was undoubtedly under his government. Moreover, it is most certain that St. Jerome himself erected a monastery with his own means, and with the patrimony which he inherited from his parents, and that he lived in it all the rest of his life. This he clearly states in the Epistle to Pammachius,[1] addressed to him on the occasion of the death of his wife, where he says at the end: "We in this province have erected a monastery, and another house as guest-house, lest Mary and Joseph should come to Bethlehem and not find a house to receive them. From all the provinces of the world we are combated by so many companies of monks that we cannot abandon the commenced erection, nor have we the means to proceed with it; and whereas it has happened to us as the Scriptures say, *that we did not well consider the cost of the tower* we wished to erect, it has become imperative to send our brother Paulinian to our country in order to sell the hamlets, towns, and landed properties which were left to us by our parents, and which may have escaped the hands of the barbarians, who have half-burnt them out, so that the holy work be not left by us unfinished, and thus become the scorn of evil men."

From this is manifest that our saintly doctor founded and erected one with his own patrimony and that of his brother. And it will be well, before descending to details,

[1] *Epist.* 26.

to see in common what life he led, the time he continued there, for he was absent sometimes, although but for a short period each time. During the time Paula and her daughter Eustochium occupied their small dwelling, St. Jerome resided in a smaller, narrower one. Here he dwelt with his brother Paulinian, conversing day and night with God, reading the holy Scriptures, pondering over it, investigating its mysteries, exercising themselves in prayer, spending whole nights in it, performing works befitting great servants of God, and in every way renewing the monastic life, vigorous, rough, and altogether opposed to that of the flesh, yet most sweet and of divine flavour to the spirit. One cannot desist from admiring the great virtue and sanctity of Paulinian. As a boy, nay, still quite a child, he came to be under the care of his brother, who was ever to him a father, tutor, and master, and we may justly say he never saw the world, nor did he know what it was, for he was so subject all his life to St. Jerome, what else could he be but an angel? And we do not read, nor is it surmised that he ever caused him the smallest displeasure, either as boy, man, or when in the position of a priest, which is a great deal to say of brothers, since it is usual for them, even if they love each other dearly, at times to have disagreements. Here we can contemplate Jerome as in his centre, in the refined enjoyment of the objects of his affection, his tender love for the crib, his joy at being close to that celestial cave, he could not contain within himself the unspeakable delight he experienced. Then, when he turned his eyes to his past life, to that bustle and tumult of Rome, that press of business which depended on him, the many and varied conditions of persons he had to attend to, he would tremble at the dangerous pass he had had to traverse, and lifting up his hands to heaven, and his heart too, he would

return thanks to the Lord Who had delivered him from so confused a Babylon! When he bent down his eyes to contemplate the crib, there would be no tenderness nor delight in the world which could equal that which his soul felt. From this arose that continual remembrance, which he makes in all his writings, of the crib and the cave, of Mary and the Infant, of Joseph, the shepherds, the star, and the magi—these are his thoughts, these his desires and yearnings, for the soul is ever more fixed where it loves than where it dwells. With this food did he sustain his life, on that hay and straw did he pasture. Oh, saintly sheep! which ever finds the manger full, because the pasture which was once placed there possesses such plenitude of graces, such an abundance of gifts, that none need hunger who feeds on *It*. The Lord Himself has said it: "*I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and he shall go in and out, and shall find pastures.*"[1] It was through this door that he entered into the divine secrets, lifting himself above this mortal life in contemplation and in the participation of the hidden mysteries of the union of the Word with man and with the flesh. At this entrance he would see his salvation and his remedy, the true liberty and the greatly desired peace, not according to flesh and blood, but that of the spirit, which the world cannot give. Going in and coming out, a freedom which is not hampered by Pharaoh, because if the Son truly gives liberty, truly will he be free in spirit and in truth, a thing which the servant cannot give. To find pasture, by which to support life, is a proof and sign of a sovereign providence, and such as the life is, such also is the food; and such did Jerome find in the crib. Oh, life of a saint! How few they are who know it, how few find it, how few seek it, although so manifest that it is

[1] John x. 9.

found in a porch and in a crib! It was there that Jerome found it, because he said in his heart: "*Man, when he was in honour and glory, did not understand: he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them,*[1] through wishing to equal himself with God. Now, God makes Himself the food of sheep, in order that they should find with humility what they had lost through pride."

Such were the delights, and this the life of the saint; day and night does he treat upon this, and yet he thinks it is tepidity, and that he does not do what he ought. In the Proem of Book II. of his *Commentaries upon the Epistle to the Ephesians*, writing to Paula and Eustochium, he says: "In virtue of your prayers I start a beginning of the second book to send to Rome as a small gift. Not that it should be read, no indeed! by the senate of doctors, nor that it should be placed in the old library along with the works of the ancients, but simply because our saintly Marcella urged me to hurry on with the work. How often is she in my memory! I bear in mind her solicitudes and her desires, and as often do I condemn my own tepidity and my slothfulness, because being as I am all in solitude, and in the enjoyment of this monastic peace, and having before me the crib at which, coming in haste, the shepherds adored the weeping Child, I am not able to do that which a noble woman, in the midst of the noise of her family and the cares of her household, knows how to effect in its proper time and at appointed hours!"

Jerome was in an extreme degree a lover of solitude, and of the fields, and, withdrawing himself to his little cell, he never lost the good habits of the monk and of that early life of the desert. Often does he refer to them in his writings to Theophilus, St. Augustine, to Rufinus

[1] Psalm xlix.

and others; and unless the many needs of the government of his monks or the presence of guests brought him out, he always retained his loved solitude. It was in solitude that he gathered together those treasures with which he enriched the Church by his writings and prayer; it was there that he enjoyed the delightful moments of contemplation. Replying to Vigilantius, he employs the following words towards the end of the book:[1] "Virtue is a rare thing: it is attained by few, and would to God all should be like to these few, of whom it is said, *many are called and few are chosen*, because very soon should we see prisons empty. The monk has not the office of doctor, but of *weeper*, because to him belongs the duty of weeping for himself and for all the world, and he is with fear awaiting the coming of the Lord. Such a one, because he knows his weakness, and how fragile is the vessel he carries within him, fears to meet stumbling-blocks, lest he should fall and break it. From this it comes that he shuts himself up, guarding his eyes, and withdrawing from all things to such a degree that even what is safe he fears. For what reason, you will ask me, do you retire into solitude? I will answer. That I do so in order that I may not be seen or heard, in order that I may not have to suffer your contentions, that I may avoid the eyes of the bold resting on me, or the wantonness of beautiful forms agitating my thoughts. You will rejoin at once—this is not fighting, it is flying away like a coward! Do not fly, keep to your post, form with your arms a bulwark against the enemy, so that, when you shall have conquered, you may be crowned. Now listen, Vigilantius. If I fly away, I remain free, I shall escape the sword. If I stand and wait, I must needs do either thing. I must conquer, or remain stricken down on the battlefield; therefore, who is it that

[1] *Contra Vig.*

can force me to put aside the certain for a doubtful issue? Either with my shield or with my feet must I escape from death. You who fight may conquer or be conquered. Small security is there in sleeping close to a serpent. It may not bite me, but it may also at some time or another sting me to death." It was this fear that made St. Jerome withdraw and enclose himself. It is for this reason that he invites from that crib. And this example induced many to come to him from all parts of the world, to imitate him, and place themselves beneath his discipline in these holy places, forsaking country, parents, and all the comforts of the world. During the first years of the sojourn here they were housed the best way they could; in that poverty and want of all comfort they lived contented, until Jerome and Paula erected the monasteries and guest-house wherein those resorting there could be entertained as in a monastery.

The holy doctor followed another exercise, by which he has shown us how deeply rooted humility was in his soul. All pilgrims and guests who resorted to Bethlehem (and they were many) had him to wash their feet. A great work indeed, but greater the virtue, and greater still his merit. A labour indeed worthy of so great a saint, a labour sprung from a faith which in truth was not dormant. Who would have said that so grave a doctor, intellectually occupied in such deep subjects, elevated to the most excellent degree in the sacred letters, should abase himself to so low a work? This most certainly would not be said of those who seek the study of the science of theology for lesser ends than those which the title and profession teach. Jerome had learned this in the sacred Scriptures; thus it was that the crib was teaching him. This thing did he practise in Bethlehem. This comes of living in the Holy Land—the imitation of the life of One Who by His example left it

sanctified, for He did not order us, when He washed the feet of the disciples, that we should go to live in the Holy Land, but to do what He did when He was there. This is declared by Jerome himself, when forced by a calumny raised against him by Rufinus that he had received kindly a priest called Paul, whom Bishop Theophilus had deprived of his office. He says: "Our intention and aim in the monastery is to exercise hospitality, and all who are received come to us with benign countenance, for we fear lest Mary and Joseph should not find a shelter in our hospice, and then Jesus being cast out should address us in these words: *I was a stranger, and you received me not.* It is solely heretics we do not receive, and these are alone those you receive. Our whole solicitude is to wash the feet of all those who resort to us, but not to examine their merits."

This exercise was very proper to such a saint, for it sprang from the profound consideration of what had been practised by the One only Master. It has been said by saints, and in truth with great sanctity, that it was not only an example, but that it was a sacrament. An example it was, wherein He manifested His love, and gave us the three proofs which are to be found in love, because He not only washed the feet of His friends, but even of those who, bereft of discretion, persist in not wishing to be healed of their evils. Yet the proof does not end here, for He also washed the feet of the enemy, even of him, who at the very moment of His washing them, was actually deliberating in his heart how he could carry out the sale and treachery of His betrayal. This is the example, and thus does He ordain we should do and serve Him, for our service is profitable to our friend, to the impertinent, to the enemy, from the lowest to the highest office, whether he be humble, or whether he be great. It was the sacra-

ment which Peter did not comprehend then, though as for the example all present understood it. He who is clean has no need that his head and hands be washed, but only his feet, for none can be called clean who has his head, face, and hands soiled. To have the feet clean and washed by the hands of Christ was a great sacrament, which was not understood by Peter until he saw it carried out on himself. All this requires more space in order to understand it thoroughly. Our Jerome imitates the first, leaving for its owner the second; he manifests equally to all his love without difference, he embraces all; and whereas, after a long journey, those who come on a pilgrimage are footsore and wounded, they have need that for their sake this labour of humility and comfort be exercised on them. Charity brings down Jerome to wash such feet; and even should Judas himself come, who intended to sell him, this treachery would not mitigate or cool his love, for he would also wash him, for so it was enjoined by the Master.

This mustering together of many religious people caused a goodly assortment of clever intellects to come together, capable of conversing and treating on grave and learned questions, and thus raise the standard to something higher than the holy rusticity of the deserts. Jerome, by night and by day, occupied himself in expounding the holy Scriptures. He arranged times and places in which, after the completion of the divine office and other monastic duties, each, as it fell to him, explained and expounded the sacred Scriptures, more especially the Psalms, which were ordinarily what was most practised, and the melody, which was constantly on their lips. It was the translation of the Septuagint which was generally used in choir, although, as we have seen, he himself had made another translation from the Hebrew, but he made use then of the one with which all were familiar.

We shall farther on examine and investigate whether the exposition of the Psalms which is circulated as his among his works be really so; now, it suffices to have understood the common exercises followed by our saint, and his ordinary occupations, which, as we have seen, are all full of sanctity and perfection.

DISCOURSE THE TWELFTH

What St. Jerome effected during the First Years of his Residence in Bethlehem.

Having stated what in general was the routine led by our saint in the ordinary way after his arrival at Bethlehem, and what his occupation during the course of his life, which in truth God granted to him to be of such length that of none of the doctors of the Church do we find any who exceeded him in years, it will be well now to descend to particulars, and see in detail what especial works he effected, according to the events of the age, for the common benefit of the Church. The first of the labours undertaken, after coming to Bethlehem, was the translation of the Book of Solomon, which in Hebrew is called *Coheleth*, in Greek *Ecclesiastes*, in Latin *Concionator*. In the original it is in the feminine gender, because the mind and wisdom which was in the son of David, Solomon, most wise king, were what formed the sum and reason of this book. When narrating the occupations of St. Jerome in Rome, we spoke of his having made that book the subject-matter of his discourses with the holy women he had instructed there, which, coming as it did from such a master, was of great force. He had promised Blesilla—who was one of those who more largely profited by his teaching, as was seen by her change of life—to write a

commentary upon this book. This remained for the time being in abeyance, because God took her soul to heaven, but now he undertakes the translation from the Hebrew into Latin, and thus puts in writing what he had given by word of mouth.

About this time, or soon after, he also wrote learned books against Jovinian, a heretic, whose errors and life corresponded. Jovinian had been first a monk, but finding the monastic life too rough, determined to leave it; he became a priest, and his efforts were directed to amassing a great fortune. In order to colour his wretched aims and maintain his apostasy, despite that he was neither learned nor eloquent, he was minded to become a master, and thus teach a doctrine very much out of his own head, and like to his wickedness. Among a number of absurdities, which were pointed out by St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and others, was the one that the married life was not of less merit than virginity; also that it was of no consequence to fast or not to fast, to live luxuriously or to abstain, and other things similar, very proper to such as renounce their religious habit, and from that exalted state fall into the abyss of great evils; hence it is quite just that the whole world should detest these bad people. In Rome he found some to follow his evil doctrine, but these were a few of low condition, and some other monks like himself. His graver followers were Felix, Plotinus, Genial, Martial, and others; these, along with their master, proceeded to spread the poison throughout Rome, which took effect on weak characters, women of loose lives, and lawless people. The friends of St. Jerome wrote to him, and gave him an account of all that was passing, sending him the book of these doctrines, in order that he should refute these errors, reply to him, and undo his malice. Rome had not forgotten her Jerome,

and in her distress seeks him, and from the cave of Bethlehem demands of him to enlighten and defend her with his pen and doctrine. Our great Father did so, and with so much eloquence and speed that it seemed like a flash of lightning which had come forth from the East and appeared in the West. And whereas this was the first work which on this second visit he was sending to Rome from the Holy Land, he manifested in it great erudition, genius, subtlety, and eloquence. Had it occurred that no other memorial of St. Jerome would have remained to us but this one book, it would amply suffice to make known to us who Jerome was, and prove whether he merited to hold a first place in the ranks of sacred and profane writers. To such of my readers as may think I go too far, I pray him to read the work carefully, and he will acknowledge that I fall short of the truth.

On the arrival of these books in Rome, I am unable to say whether it took place before Pope Siricius or Ursinus (both these names being used by authors) had convened a council in the same city, or after doing so. I myself think it was previously, and that, when the Pope had seen these books, he greatly marvelled at so high a doctrine, and he gathered together all the prelates he could, who numbered eighty, and condemned the heretic and his followers, and cast them out of Rome. From thence they went on to Milan, from which, by mandate of the Pope, they were in like manner cast out, as appears by an epistle of the same pontiff. They then passed on to Africa, and spread their poison there, their poison being more deadly than that of the serpents of Libya, and there also was gathered against them the Council of Telus. By that council they were also condemned, notice being given to Pope Siricius, to whom they wrote a letter, wherein, among other things, it was declared that they were, with their evil sect,

subverting the order of the Church, removing good works and merits, and regretting that they had formerly fasted, giving themselves up to the delights of the table and a life of pleasure. The holy doctor, at the commencement of his book, calls them *Christian Epicureans*, wishing to join Christ with Epicurus, a thing more difficult than to join hell with heaven. When the book arrived in Rome it was perused with great applause by all friends, as also by others who were well disposed towards the Church, being well grounded in the faith and good customs. There were others, however, who were not so clean of the pest, and those who still bore a long-standing ill-will against Jerome—all these read and examined the work, not in order to profit their souls, but for what they could find fault with and calumniate. These evilly disposed spirits turn all things into venom! The greatest calumny they could invent against him was to say that, wishing over much to enhance the state of virginity, he had cast to the ground the state of matrimony, even to the point of seeming to condemn it. On this subject Pammachius, when advising him of the calumny brought against him, wrote an epistle beseeching Jerome to reply categorically and exonerate himself. This the saint did, and with his usual force and accustomed elegance clearly manifested the meaning of his own words. Among other skilful reasons he, in the first lines, says as follows: "If I remember rightly, the question between Jovinian and ourselves consists in that he equals virginity to matrimony, and we make the latter much inferior to it. He says the difference is small or none, and we that it is very great. Finally, it was on this point that Jovinian was condemned through your skill after God, because he dared to equal matrimony to the state of *perpetual virginity*." Let these last words be carefully observed, *perpetual virginity*, which is nothing

else but virginity under vow. It also seems very clear by these words of our saint that, when he wrote the *Apologia* in defence of his book, Pope Siricius had already held the council against the heretic, and that Pammachius had taken a large part in this, viz. that of soliciting Jerome to write against Jovinian, and had obtained his reply, and had presented it to the Pope. The learned doctor at once adds: "This is certain, that between the sentence of Jovinian and mine there is no middle term, hence it stands thus, either this or that has to be followed. If I am reprehended because I make matrimony inferior to virginity, let him be praised who equals them. And, if he is already condemned because he judged they ran together, his own condemnation is the approbation of my book. Had men of the world and of our own time grown angry with me because I placed them lower in the scale than the virgins, I would not have been surprised; but it is to me most certainly a novelty that priests and nuns, and others practising continency, should not praise the very state they live in."

I would like to transcribe here more out of these books, not so much with the object of convincing the heretics of these times, who have endeavoured to draw out from the pit of hell these same errors which the Church had laid and buried there so long ago (for this was done very learnedly by others), but that in our own tongue should be made manifest the great erudition of our saint, but I fear to obscure it by my pen.

After this letter from his friend Pammachius, Jerome received another similar one with the same advices and on the same case from another great friend, called Damian. He informed him that a certain monk, who undoubtedly had been tainted with the leprosy of Jovinian, and was gratified with the doctrine of a licentious life, had also set many objections to the book of the saintly doctor, passing

as a learned man among a certain class of women and the lower ranks of men.

These were the first labours that came forth from the cave of the crib performed by St. Jerome, and upon a very apposite occasion. The first was the art and the doctrine of the renunciation of the world, the knowledge and disillusion of its vanity. The second, the defence of virginity and its pre-eminence and loftiness; the defence, also, of holy fastings and works of perfection.

These were his exercises. His desire was that all should be proved in them, and be found true in each and all of them. He could not brook that any man should attempt to hurl them down from their position, and so they should understand that, placed in the porch of Bethlehem as he was, and like to a lion of the tribe of Juda, he must needs roar lustily against the heretics, and similarly to a fountain and cistern of most delicious waters, be the drink and refreshment of the pious and of the saintly.

BOOK THE FIFTH

SIXTH AGE—SENESCENCE

PROEM

According as it is recorded by Plato in his *Dialogues*, Socrates used to say[1] that he delighted in the conversation of the aged and to confer with them. The reason he gave, which in truth is a very good one, was as follows: "If I am obliged to follow a road, it is of importance to know its conditions from such as have already gone that way; whether it be a good or bad one, a difficult pass or easy, what perils and dangers may have to be met with, and learn from the old men what their experience has been, in order to profit from it, hence how can we spend time better than in listening to their narrative?" Nor is this knowledge to be sought for indiscriminately from any old man. Some there are (according as Plato depicts them to us) who are not old but in years; all else, which by the name of old is implied, is new, their appetites are green as that of boys, and they have no other feeling in that age, nor any experience, but the regret of seeing themselves impotent for enjoying the pleasures and delights of their youth. But the question aforesaid must needs be asked of such old men who, after a course of a well-ordered life and maturity of judgment, were able to appreciate and perceive the difficulties of the journey, the dangers to be met with, the easy entrance, the doubtful turns, and learn the course they steered to keep clear of so many difficulties, and come

[1] Plat. *Dial. de Justo*, 1.

forth loaded with spoils, victories, and crowns, by sheer virtue and prudence. Our Jerome had arrived at the sixth age in man. It is from this number that it took its name, being called the *Senario* of the Ages or, as others have it, *Senectus*, through the deficiency of that virtue or manly vigour which up to that age they had preserved. But no such thing will be said of St. Jerome, because, if up to this he has lived forty-nine years of his life, and now enters into his fiftieth, and this period lasts seven years, that is to say, until fifty-six or fifty-seven, he has been most diligent in labouring and serving the Church with extreme care, without ceasing to exercise himself in acquiring virtues, no less shall we see him in the future avoiding idleness.

To old men is applied the humiliating expression that they are in their second childhood, because at this period they are supposed to return to what they were as infants, not only as regards the conditions of the body, childish and weak, but also as regards the state of the soul. We shall not see this fulfilled in Jerome; because even when he has entered the age of decrepitude, we shall find him robust and clear, as during the former course of his life. In him, in a certain sense, the truth will be verified that he will become a boy again, because on entering this period of old age he will not disdain still to learn, and again to seek masters. In this he desires ever to be youthful and a boy, ever going forward, if anything offers itself to be learned. The contrary is what is usually done by the advanced in age; it seems to them that age is a quittance of all ignorance, and that with the authority of grey hair, without anything further, they are competent to afford a solution to whatever is asked of them. It is such as these that the Holy Spirit curses, to whom is addressed these words: "Cursed be the boy of a hundred years, for at the end of that time he has no more principle in his heart nor has he acquired more

in his understanding than a child, restless and empty." The best food for old age is the labour of youth; those who would not work in their day, now they die of hunger, like the sluggard who would not work in the summer on account of the heat, nor in the winter time by reason of the cold. Jerome loses no time. He might well now enjoy that which with so much labour he had sown and gathered; yet not satisfied with this, he wishes to commence anew and amass greater wealth, not indeed for his more advanced age, but to enrich his sons.

The age of forty-nine is a marked one in the scale of life, and a perilous pass among the climacterics, because then is joined together seven sevens—a week of years. During this period or age, our great doctor intends entering into a new phase of his life, and begins, as it were, to ascend the ladder with redoubled courage, since there still remains to him of life as many number of years as he had already passed. Jerome fully comprehends that the number forty-nine, although by the holy Scriptures it is celebrated as a jubilee, being held so after a week of weeks, which are seven times seven, when possessions are returned to their owners, and a general remission is made of debts at the sound of trumpets, also signifies the principal Feast of Pentecost, in which, after the passing of seven weeks, the Law was given to the people of Israel on the Mount, the next day being the fulfilment of the fifty, a number consecrated to penance, as the doctor himself teaches us, when expounding the third chapter in Isaias; and in confirmation brings forward for this most extraordinary passages. The same does he confirm in the Chapter XLI. upon Ezechiel. Entering into this period, Jerome purposed to take to penance more strictly, since the jubilee was celebrated for the time and years that were past, and now, on entering a new period, it seems to him that the tenour of the Law is

intimated to him; for although it be the same as the natural law, yet as up to the time he had been robust and strong, nevertheless his very energy and consequent fire may have obscured what God had written on the Soul; hence he renews the covenant which God Himself had come down to declare on the Mount. When a man has been neglectful up to the forty-ninth year of his age, during which period his powers and vigour had kept him energetic and assiduous, he has some excuse, and a jubilee may be granted him; but on reaching the fifties, and entering upon this period, that he should not perceive the calls of God, and not weep over the defects of his past life, is a great evil. Aristotle says that in youth shame is a virtue, but not in an old man, because if youth with growing age may be guilty of indiscretions, if he be ashamed of them, it appears as a sign of repentance to blush on having his fault discovered; but an old man should not, and must not, do aught which he might be ashamed of, nor has nature the flow of blood then with which to flush his face: he must needs be disabused as he is entering his year of jubilee, when all must turn to their natural Lord. This does Jerome teach us at this period when he is entering upon old age, if we only pay attentive heed, and watch and note his course of life.

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

St. Jerome quits Bethlehem for Alexandria, to converse with Didymus.

How it befits saints to have lowly opinion of themselves! This virtue of humility is able to effect great things, when truly and without deceit it takes root in the heart. It appears to Jerome that there is yet time to be a disciple, and that there is in others a great deal to be learned, and that in himself there is nothing for others to learn, and that, if at any time he attempts to teach, it is because he is importuned to do so. The whole world holds him as a master; to him resort men as to a flowing, powerful fountain; meanwhile, he himself is seeking masters from whom to learn. In his opinion he is so far behind, that without regard to the fact that he inspires great respect, without a glance at the opinion in which he is held in Rome and in the whole of the West, without considering that his monks and his spiritual children might repose less confidence, and his credit be thereby diminished, he goes to be a listener to Didymus in Alexandria. Undoubtedly this blind Didymus was very learned and enlightened in the sacred Scriptures; his fame was great throughout the East, and he knew much. It occurred therefore to Jerome that it would be right and useful to frequent his school and place himself at his feet as his

disciple. On this point Jerome always continued to follow the manner of learning which we have mentioned already at the beginning of the Second Book, namely seeing, communicating, and conversing face to face, and hearing the living voice, for it appeared to him that thereby there could be no deception, while that which is only seen written down suffers deception.

Didymus was a native of Alexandria. When quite a boy a severe illness affected his eyes, and he became totally blind. St. Jerome tells us that his illness came upon him so early in life that he could have had no idea of the form and type of letters. Others say that at the time he was already learning grammar; but who could know better than he who on purpose visited and conversed with him, as St. Jerome did? And Jerome speaks and enlarges upon this blindness as to a miracle, that he should have had no knowledge of having seen letters in his life. Not only was Didymus remarkable as a great and keen dialectician, but also was so learned a mathematician that it seems on all counts miraculous how he was particularly clever in geometry, a thing which depends so largely on sight, more especially to beginners, and of such assistance that it seems utterly impossible to attain this science without sight. Moreover, he was a great arithmetician, for the one thing follows the other. As for rhetoric and the art of speaking, few, or none, excelled him in his time. Yet the long sight which God gave him in his soul, in exchange for that which was denied him corporally, was not circumscribed to this point, because he rose up with such lucidity and advantage to consider the divine mysteries, and elucidated so many of these and such hidden ones in the Old and New Testaments that he far outstripped nearly all the learned men of his age. That which the great Anthony, the Father of Hermits, said to Didymus, when he came to converse with

him in Alexandria, is worthy of being enlarged on, for he found him somewhat hurt, and sad at his want of sight, but Anthony consoled him with these words: "Do not grieve and be sad, O Didymus! at the want of sight in your eyes, a thing common to imperfect men and to animals, but rejoice that other eyes have been given you very similar to those of the angels, by which God is seen and contemplated in light divine!"

Oftentimes does our doctor allude to this sentence. Among others, he says:[1] "My Didymus having those eyes which are attributed to the Spouse of the Canticles, and those channels of light with which our Master, Jesus Christ, bade His followers lift their eyes to see the harvest which was becoming white, looks down from the highest point and renews to us in himself those ancient times when the prophets were called seers. Whoso would read him will perceive in him the thefts of many of our Latins, and will belittle the streamlet when he commences to enjoy the fountain and source. He is not distinguished in style, but he is so in science. The former manifests him to be an apostolic man, both in the clearness of the sense and in the simplicity of his words." Didymus wrote many works, as appears in the catalogue which our saint made of them in his work on *Illustrious Masters*, many commentaries upon the sacred Scriptures, and merits from them an everlasting name.

Jerome quitted Bethlehem in order to seek out and converse with Didymus, proceeding to Alexandria at the age above mentioned, and at the time that grey hair covered his head. He communicated his doubts to Didymus; he penetrated his manner of expounding theology; he recognised in the man a lofty genius; he learned from him many things he had not yet attained; he drew from him

[1] Ad Paulinianum fratrem, in Proœmio, lib. *De Spiritu Sancto.*

many secrets: it was in truth a journey of great profit. St. Jerome, writing to his two friends Pammachius and Oceanus, confesses it in his epistle to them, where he says: "My hair was already grey, and from my age it were more proper to be a master than a disciple, nevertheless I departed for Alexandria, and constituted myself a hearer of Didymus. I return him a thousand thanks for many things, and I owe him much, because I learned what I did not know, and what I had knowledge of I did not lose or forget through what he had taught me."

It appears to me that these last words gives us to understand that many things which he had found with his genius tallied with what Didymus told him both extraordinary and excellent. In the preface of the *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Ephesians* he confirms the above. "I have not ceased to read since I was young," he says, "nor have I ceased to ask what I did not know from learned men; nor have I made myself my own master, like many others do, who presume thus. It was chiefly for this reason that I not very long ago journeyed to Alexandria to see Didymus and ask of him all that was a cause of doubt to me in the holy Scriptures."

From these words will be clearly perceived the desire of this holy doctor, for, at an age when he could so worthily have been a master, as he himself confesses, yet he so earnestly assumes the form of a disciple. In this we have the examples of men of fame such as Themistocles, Cato, Solon, and others who acted similarly. The first said when he was at the point of death, that he was sorry to die because death came just at the very time when he was commencing to learn, and he was then 107 years of age. The second, when over sixty began leisurely to learn Greek, while the last surpassed these, for, on being asked how long should a man continue to

learn and be a student, he replied that he should be one as long as he lived. And if to these wise men we add a fourth — and that one Jerome — he will tell you with his work what the others do by words. Jerome never made a truce in his desires for learning. Well has he proved all this up to the present stage, when he is already grey, and still his thirst will not be slaked nor the wrinkles of extreme age prevent him.

Between Didymus and Jerome there was established a great friendship; the great Didymus delighted in having such a disciple. I believe they alternately changed places, and that, if Jerome made progress under Didymus, no less did Didymus profit by Jerome. He soon perceived the great genius and intellect of our saint, and he esteemed this great man so much that he judged him a good subject to whom to dedicate his works. Didymus had finished some very learned commentaries upon Osee, and dedicated them to Jerome, feeling that his labours would be blessed when placed under such a defender and patron; and in truth it is most certainly great praise for a Latin doctor to be so highly esteemed by him who was considered the flower of the whole of Greece, furthermore Didymus was much older than Jerome. He was also asked by Jerome to make some commentaries upon Zacharias, which he did at his petition.

The translation which St. Jerome was making of the book of Didymus, *Of the Holy Ghost*, for Damasus, as we said before, but which, owing to circumstances that intervened, he had put aside, he subsequently finished when in Bethlehem, as appears by the first words of the preface addressed to his brother Paulinian, to whom he dedicates the translation of the three books.

After Jerome had enjoyed the company and conversation of Didymus, and gathered together all he

could, which surpassed his expectations, like a well-freighted ship, he returned from Alexandria to Bethlehem, loaded with precious information, a merchandise which time could not corrupt and which could not be stolen by the hands of pirates. He was received with great joy by Paula, and by all his brethren, as is the case when a dearly loved father returns to his children, full of great expectations of doubling his wealth.

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

St. Jerome seeks a Hebrew preceptor, in order to perfect himself in the language.

On returning to Bethlehem, Jerome resumed his accustomed exercises of virtues, prayer, reading, and meditation, even joining to these a rigorous penance, hair shirts, fastings, watchings, and chastisement of the rebel flesh. All these were to Jerome his daily bread: it seemed to him that he would not be a monk, were he to neglect these exercises, nor should he deserve to bear such a name, if he even effected a truce with them. We shall continue to see in this saint that each time he speaks of things relating to religion and the monastic life, he ever sets these obligations to the office and state, as though native and essential to them. Moreover, he always keeps in mind that he is doctor of the Church, although as to this, in secret and without even perceiving it himself, he is impelled by the Divine Spirit, hence his thought is never outside the law of the Lord; it is to this law that he withdraws in the secret of the night, and in the deepest and most profound of his thoughts naught else is treated on nor considered. At times he found, when engaged in this exercise, that it was of importance, in order to run more freely along in these holy studies, to have a fuller knowledge of the Hebrew language, and that there should

be no excellence which he could not attain, or be ignorant of, and that to this greater knowledge of Hebrew should be added, with advantage, the study of Chaldaic, on account of its nearness to it, and because there are many books in the sacred Scriptures which partake very largely of this mixture of both languages. But this knowledge is not sufficient even so, nor are all the difficulties solved by this study of the tongues, for it is also necessary to join to these a knowledge of the history, antiquity, customs, traditions of that ancient people, and their rites, and that of other races with whom they mixed and communicated, whether through captivity or by permission. To learn their familiar intercourse, policy, mode of government, and all else that is proper to a nation, for otherwise, without this knowledge and care, great errors creep in, when speaking incautiously of the holy books, as we clearly perceive when we examine the many differences which exist between ourselves and the natives of Africa, or between the Christian republic and that of the Turks, or between the Spanish and the Arab races. There are infinite allusions to this in the sacred Scriptures, by reason of which we stumble at every step. Jerome perceived this deficiency; he was minded to effect a remedy by making himself conversant with all these studies. For this end he sought a Hebrew by nation, who should be among that people considered learned in the law, to instruct him in what he desires to know. He wanted to hear from him the manner of expounding Scripture, and proceed carefully, noting all particulars, which things being what they were could not be known by one not reared among them. I feel confident that this was an inspiration from God, in order that His Church should possess in Jerome all that on this score might yet be wanting to her, at least as much as sufficed to give light, and sense

to open the eyes of the minds of those who would subsequently follow, and thus be able to know how to seek and carry to a conclusion all that in the things of this kind should still require investigation, and which it was not possible for our saint to carry out. Origen likewise adverted to this labour, who was a man of great genius, and laborious, and he even sought for Hebrew masters, both for the language and for what I have mentioned above; but his diligence, however, was of small fruit, since his dogmas and doctrines, set on wrong foundations and perverse aims, erased what there was of good in relation to the exposition of the Scriptures, as well as by employing over much allegory he was unable to discover truly the force of the letter and the marrow of the Scriptures, for the aim of the spirit is not attained properly without the study of the *plain facts* of history and the coherence of the letter.

St. Jerome, following out this idea, sought for and found a Jew, by name *Barahanina*, or *Barrabino*, who, it is supposed, dwelt in Jerusalem, and obtained, at a heavy price, that he should teach him what he knew of Hebrew, and his knowledge of the traditions of his teachers. The Jew was greatly moved to do this by the high price offered, for the Jews are by nature covetous, and also from witnessing in St. Jerome a great desire and interest in all that appertained to the Jewish law, although he was not aware why Jerome so greatly desired this. On the other hand, the Jew ran a great risk and danger from those of his own nation and parentage, because it is forbidden to their race, under heavy penalties, to commune with the Christians, or teach them the secrets of the law. This Hebrew knew not what to do: cupidity was felt on both sides, that of the Jew on account of gain, and Jerome, who burned with the desire at any price to learn these

secrets, which fact decided the question, and it was arranged that the Rabbi should come secretly, and by night, to give Jerome his lesson: in this way the danger to the one was averted, and the desire of the other fulfilled. All this knowledge held by the Jew he very well knew how to enhance and sell at a great price. Jerome did not object to give him all he could, because the treasures of earth, compared to the science of the Scriptures, bear no proportion whatever. This statement our saint has made oftentimes, although in brief words. When writing to Pammachius and Oceanus, after narrating the journey he had taken to Alexandria, he says as follows: "Men had judged I had ceased to be a disciple and a student. That in me had ceased the desire of learning, yet on my return to Jerusalem from Alexandria, and from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, God knows with how much labour, and even at what a price, it cost me to possess as preceptor the Jew Barahanina, who came to me in the night time, and through fear of the Jews resorted to me at those hours, and who fancied himself to be another new Nicodemus." From this is understood how far from reason was Rufinus, and how full of malice he was in reprehending St. Jerome for an act which brought so much advantage to the Church, that of studying these subjects so thoroughly and fully in the Hebrew tongue itself, and for seeking preceptors to enlighten him, buying, so to say, that knowledge because it was on sale.

To Rufinus it appeared that St. Jerome committed a kind of sacrilege in doing this, and he makes a puerile allusion to Barahanina and Barabbas by saying that our doctor was like to the Jews, who, when Pilate gave the choice between Jesus and Barabbas at the Passover, chose Barabbas and denied Christ, that in this way had Jerome acted. But in quite another manner did the

Church judge Jerome, and the effect demonstrated it, as it has been clearly proved by those who so largely have profited by his pious labours. Many, even in our day, act in a similar manner, for, on finding that some one attains to the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, they at once suspect him of denying Jesus Christ for Barabbas, an idea worthy only of ignorant men. Jerome took no heed of this calumny: he simply replied to it as a thing worthy of laughter, and in the *Apologia* addressed to Rufinus he tells him:[1] "I have heard it said of the epistle I addressed to Rome, that you picked out some things, in order to philosophise against me, and that, like a grave man and a thinker, you judge and speak witticisms like another Plautus, because I said that Barrabino, a Jew, was my preceptor. And I do not marvel that, when there is an allusion to the names Barahanina and Barabbas, you should have written *Barabbas*, since it is common to you in these similarities of names to take such licence that from *Eusebius* you make a travesty into *Pamphilius* and from *martyr*, *heretic*; from which I perceive that it becomes needful to equal oneself to you, and it behoves me greatly to keep as far as possible from you, because during the space of time required for reciting two creeds, without my knowing how or when, you might make out of *Jerome*, *Sardanapalus*."

And in order the better to understand the feeling and intention which urged our saintly doctor to study the things of the Hebrews, and what were the things he ever wanted to learn from them, and what was the advantage he sought thereby to gain for the Church, let us linger to hear from him in a few brief words a declaration of his intentions and thoughts. In the already quoted epistle to Pammachius he added these words: "If by any reason

[1] *Apolog.* lib. i. c. 3.

it may be permissible to abhor any kind of men, and abominate any nation, I confess that I have a particular hatred against the Jews, because up to the present day they persecute Jesus Christ in their synagogues." And when expounding those words of Isaias,[1] "*Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to the Soul that is despised,*" he declares that these words fitted the person of Christ, because like a good shepherd He laid down His life and His soul for His sheep, and for their sakes despised it: and this is an abomination to the Jews, and thus they meet together three times daily in their synagogues to curse His name under the name of *Nazarene.*

The Jews were well aware that their great evils and fall came to them from the death of Christ, and, instead of opening their eyes under the chastisement, they hardened themselves and became worse, as Pharaoh did in former times: and in this same blindness do they continue, and will continue, until it shall please God to fulfil what, through His Holy Prophets and Apostles, He has promised—to open their eyes, in order that they should know that which for so long they had waited, and Him whom, when they had Him in their own hands, they had reprobated; and let not their gain be our own fall, a thing we have greatly to fear. They being native branches,[2] God broke them down, for their infidelity, from the trunk in order to engraft us therein. For, if God hath not spared the natural branches, beware lest He also spare thee not. For, if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is natural to thee, and contrary to nature wert grafted into the good olive tree, how much more shall they that are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? And may His Divine Majesty not punish us by reason of our own pride, on our falling into

[1] Isaias, c. 49. v. 7. [2] Romans xi.

the same blindness, who pride ourselves upon bearing the name of *faithful*, despising all others. These words convey the teaching of the doctor of the Gentiles, to make us humble, and lower us from our own haughtiness, which even in the early days of St. Jerome had already become manifest.

And if this be doubted, let us turn our eyes around us, and take warning from the many examples we have daily before us from Jerusalem to Spain. Every time that I look upon this incredulous race spread throughout the world—for in truth there is no race under the sun which is so extended—without laws, without king, without priests, without nation, slaves, affronted, odious and infamous, it seems to me a general warning of God to all the world placed before our eyes by Him in order that in them we should read the truth that with Him there is no accepting of persons. The sons of saintly parents, who were so beloved of God, and with whom alone He spoke, and conversed, and treated for little less than five thousand years, yet notwithstanding all this He keeps them in due servitude for so many centuries, so withdrawn from Himself and so cast in oblivion that there is scarcely a nation which more gravely offends God, nor one which, as a consequence, God chastises so deeply for being His enemies.

For the love of God let us open our eyes, and let us be warned by their blindness. All this has our saint made us say, explaining what his own feelings were in regard to this wretched people, and what his motives were for wishing to study their secrets so carefully. St. Jerome did not hold them as teachers who were so much his enemies. He learned from them the manner of defending himself against themselves, and grasped their own weapons in order, with these said arms, to cut them down. This same avaricious

Barahanina, conquered by love of greed, broke his very laws: and had this been made known, he would undoubtedly have been put to death, in accordance with these same laws. Both the Jew and the saint took advantage of the darkness of the night, the Jew to clutch at the money safely, the saint to draw light for his own labours, hence he adds: "Right well could I have quoted in that letter Gregory Nazianzen, a most eloquent writer, who, among the Latins, has no equal, of which master I take pride and rejoice: but I only named those who had some note, in order to signify thereby that, if I do read Origen, it is not on account of the purity and truth of his faith, but on account of the great erudition which is found in him. And this same Origen, and Clement, Eusebius, and many others, when they discuss or treat upon the Scriptures, and wish to prove what they say, use these expressions: *This was referred to me by a Hebrew—I heard this from a Hebrew—This is the sentence of the Hebrews.*"

What we have said suffices for our intention. Whoever should wish to enter further on this point of the Hebrew interpretations, let him read over the preface of the *Exposition of the Lamentations of Jeremias* by St. Jerome, as this discourse would otherwise exceed its proper measure.

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

On some of the Pious Labours which St. Jerome undertook from the Hebrew to enrich the Church.

St. Jerome did not rest satisfied with what learning he had attained from the study and acquisition of the languages which, at the cost of so much labour and expense, he had learned. Whereas in the holy Scriptures there were some books written in the language of Chaldea, such as the books of Daniel, Esdras, Judith, his friends gave him no peace in their importunities until he translated them into Latin, and he undertook this work, which necessitated the study of Chaldean, a labour that he himself calls great, for it was the study not of what is called *Syro-chaldaic*, which is the common language of Palestine, and the one consecrated by our Lord, His Holy Mother, and the apostolic college, by employing and conversing in it, but the ancient one of Babylon, in which these aforesaid books were written, as well as a large portion of the Targum, which is the Chaldean Paraphrase of Jonas and Onkelos. It is true to say that the common Syriac draws from this its origin, but greatly declining from its beginning, as occurs in the others. In the prologue on Tobias the saint tells us that, when he made the translation, some one would translate the words into Hebrew, and from Hebrew he himself would then turn them into Latin. In the prologue

on Daniel, St. Jerome enlarges on the labour that this cost him, and expresses himself in these terms: "You must know that Daniel, more especially, and Esdras, and a part of Jeremias, although written in Hebrew characters, yet are in the Chaldean tongue. Job also bears a great similarity to the *Aramaic* language. When I was a youth, after lessons on Quinctilian and Cicero, and the study of the flowers of rhetoric, I would withdraw to pursue the study of the Hebrew tongue, and it was only after many days of great labour that I barely attained to sound the words, which have to be uttered with clenched teeth and gasping efforts, like one who proceeds along a darksome cave, and just in the far distance merely descries a tiny gleam of light. At length I fell upon Daniel, and then came over me such great despondency and sorrow that, assailed by a sudden despair, I felt impelled to throw up the work and lose the fruit of my past labours. But I was admonished by a Jew not to do so, and oftentimes did he tell me in his Hebrew tongue: *Continued labour overcomes everything*; I, then, who among the Hebrews believed I knew something, became a student of the Chaldean. And I will state the truth, even to this day I read and understand it better than I can pronounce it. I have stated all this that you may understand the great difficulty that Daniel presented."

From this I infer that the saint had studied the Chaldean language in his early years when in the desert; although he studied it when already advanced in the knowledge of Hebrew, and thus it has to be done, since Hebrew is, as it were, the principle of the other.

Among the other great treasures which Jerome bequeathed to the Church (besides many others which time has consumed) there are three existing still, which were the fruits of these labours in the aforesaid languages. The first is *On the Hebraic Questions, or Hebrew Transla-*

tions. In this work he tries to manifest the variations in the translation which in his time was called the Vulgate, that is to say, of the Septuagint, in the manner already stated by me, and which we shall also see from his own words, from the Hebrew text, and afterwards arrange the discordance and unravel the difficulties which result from this difference.

Let us listen to his own version. In the proem to this book of his he says as follows: "I earnestly beseech the reader (should there be any one to read this with pleasure) not to seek in the books *On the Hebraic Questions,* which I have attempted to write on all the sacred text, elegancies nor subtlety of oratory, but rather to give answer for me to my adversaries to pardon in this the novelty of the work." Then farther on he adds: "What I pretend in this is to undo the errors of those who think that in the Hebrew text there is a variation as regards what is less clear and perfect in the Latin and Greek books, and to reduce it to its native purity, and declare in passing the etymology of the things and of the names of the regions which in our own tongue do not sound as in the original, and their reason in the Latin language; and to the end that with greater facility these emendations be made known, I will set the testimonies themselves first, as we now read them, so that by collating them with what follows it may be manifestly seen what exists, what may be more or what is wanting, or what is stated differently. I do not thereby mean, as the envious might allege, that I pretend to reprehend the seventy interpreters for their errors, nor think that this work of mine is a reproof on theirs, because they did not wish to reveal the sacraments and mysteries of the sacred Scriptures to King Ptolemy of Alexandria, more especially on what touched and was promised by the coming of Christ: so that it should not appear that the Jew worshipped a different god.

This was the reason that Ptolemy held the Jews in such high esteem, in which, as a follower of the doctrine of Plato, he maintained and believed in one only God."

This was the first work of our saint. Of this sacred monument there has remained nought in the works of St. Jerome but the questions on the book of Genesis, and those of the First Book of Kings, and part of the Third Book. Respecting these and those of the Chronicles, a suspicion exists that they are not the same as those he wrote, but some questions gathered from his own by some person who had made them his study. This suspicion is well founded, because they lack that measure of diligence observed in the first, and the frequent quotation from the Septuagint, which was the foundation for what was assumed, and the other translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian. Nevertheless, they partake very much of the gravity and doctrine of the saint, and undoubtedly they came forth from his study, and as such they are held by all learned men.

The second of these works, and the result of his study of languages, is the one bearing the title of *Hebrew Places*,[1] which is in effect the catalogue of the names of cities, towns, castles, mountains, vineyards, rivers, and other particular places contained in the sacred books. In this work he imitates Eusebius Pamphilius, and takes many things from him, while leaving others aside: changing some and obliterating others: sometimes he translates, and at other times he comes forth like a new author. Undoubtedly it is genuinely a work of vast erudition, of deep knowledge and great fund of information of ancient things and of history. In those days there existed relics of good books, and many were entire, of which at the present day we barely even know the names.

Following these studies came a third, of no less utility

[1] *De locis Hebræicis.*

or showing less genius. This was the interpretation of the Hebrew names mentioned in the whole of the sacred Scriptures, a study which has been of great profit to all authors, whether Greek or Latin. I recall to mind having mentioned above that proper names in the Hebrew generally enclose some mystery, and are given by divine counsel, hence, for this reason, the Fathers of the Church have drawn many holy considerations, and been able to declare many difficult passages of the holy Scriptures, which, without a perfect knowledge of names and their etymology, it would have been impossible to elucidate. And here it would seem a fit occasion to discuss again the antiquity of the Hebrew language, which, with great force, is manifested to us to have been the first language spoken by men in the world, and the one in use at the Deluge; in fact the only one down to the time of the Tower of Babel. God punished the pride of men, who, with one spirit and one language, pretended to make their names eternal before dividing themselves throughout the breadth of the lands, and leave there a monument of the vanity of their inheritance and antiquity. In order to rend to shreds this vain counsel, God confounded their tongue and the speech, and thus they lost their native language, which is, as has been said, the one that remained with the Canaanites, and which, later on, was called the Hebrew. And the reason is the one we have touched upon in the interpretation of names. Because if, as we have seen, all, or nearly all, the proper names in the sacred Scriptures, which are written in the Hebrew tongue, or in that of Canaan (as we have them even at present), and have always been so, were taken from the verbs of that language, and are the same as God had given to the first men and the patriarchs, as is proved by deductions and etymologies which they alluded to at the time they were given, and as these do not

correspond to any other tongue, it is evident that it was that tongue they used and the same they spoke.

The examples and the observations by which this has to be proved are without number: they are, in truth, nearly all the names in the divine letters, a reason being given for conferring the name, why it was called so, or why such a name was given, whether by God himself, or whether by man. Thus it is seen in the naming of Adam, of Eve, of Cain and Abel, Cham, Noe, Abraham, Sara and so forth: and it stands to reason that in conferring a name which should bear a signification to some event or intention, it would be very unlikely to seek for it in a strange tongue, but rather in its own and generally known one, so that all should understand.

St. Jerome was not satisfied with solely giving us the interpretation of the Hebrew and Chaldean names of the Old Testament; but he also examined all the Greek ones, and even the Arabic and Syriac ones of the New Testament. By these three pious and erudite monuments did St. Jerome enrich us, and with some lofty principles for our advantage and profit, if we would wish to imitate him in the study and knowledge of the sacred scriptures, a task of so much importance for the advancement of such as merit the name of Christian. I cannot imagine how any one can boast of being a Christian, and a religious, who, drawn to other books, which are so far different from this one, profit in what the name of Christian demands. Hence our great doctor hazards to say that he who knows not the Scriptures knows not Christ. And, forasmuch as one of my principal motives for thus writing the history of this great Father has been to induce in members of the religious orders the study of the holy Scriptures, through following his example and his doctrine, I wish to bring forward here a passage of his which may suffice to convince the understanding, and draw

to this love the most obstinate will. In the preface of his *Commentaries upon Isaiah* he addresses thus the holy virgin Eustochium: "I wish to repay you the debt and satisfy the obligation in obedience to the precept of Christ which orders us to *search the Scriptures*, and in another place says: *Seek and you shall find*: so that I should not have to bear the reproach addressed to the Jews by Him: *You err because you know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God.* Hence if, according to the apostle St. Paul, Christ is the power of God, and the Wisdom of God, and he who knows not the Scriptures neither knows nor understands the power of God, nor His Wisdom, by a legitimate consequence it is true to say, and deduce, that to know not the Scriptures is to know not Christ."

In another preface he says: "If there is any thing that could detain in this life a wise man, as a thing which keeps him in peace and even spirit in the midst of so many storms and great changes, in my opinion the principal and first reason is the meditation and knowledge of the sacred Scriptures. Because, as the important point in which we differ from the brute creation is our being rational and having the power of speech, and, whereas all reason and expression is contained in these divine books, by means of which we learn what God is, and we comprehend the reason why we were created, I marvel greatly that there should be any one who, either through being given up to sleep, to listlessness, or to idleness, does not care to engage himself in the study of great things, or who dares to reprehend those who are engaged in doing so." Under these two most efficacious reasons has our Jerome concluded that—he who should desire to know what Christ is, Who is our only good, and our very life, he must know this virtue and wisdom, which comes from God, and he who should wish to pass over with even mind and large heart the changes, the roaring

waves, and the deeply dangerous encounters of this world, let him seek to study, meditate, and ponder over the sacred Scriptures. And lastly, he who should desire to know the only one thing that there is to know—the eternal word, the science, which knows no change, the reasons which exceed all reason, let him deliver up his soul to the divine books, since in no other place is it found but in them: here is the source found, here it is we drink from the actual fountain.

Our grave doctor concludes this great Epistle to Paulinus[1] by expressing himself in these words: "I beseech you, dearly loved brother, let your life be no other than this, think of nothing else; do not desire to know any other thing, nor seek aught else. Does it not seem that here below on earth you already enjoy the mansions of heaven?" Oh! how well does the saint express what his soul experienced! Because in the same way as there is no creature who more vividly tells us what God is, nor a more clear mirror upon which to gaze upon Him than His own written word, so also is there no one thing for the friends of God—after God Himself—in which they can recreate themselves and feel so much joy as in His own words. The delight they experience in this exceeds all else created: it partakes of the fragrance of the celestial life: for a man to understand it, and it to be understood by man, is a pleasure which is not known but by the man who possesses it, and, what is more admirable (a thing which does not occur in any other created science), is that, when once it is possessed, it is so thoroughly known that he retains neither suspicion nor opinion.

[1] *Epist.* 103.

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH

St. Jerome diligently visits the whole of the Holy Land, with the object of understanding the Chronicles, and other books of the Sacred Scriptures.

Words fail, and all eloquence is dumb to praise the diligence of this great Father in collecting treasures with which to enrich the Church. Shortly after his return from visiting Alexandria, or, as he himself expresses it, from the school of Didymus, his friends Damian and Rogatian importuned him to begin to translate the book which in Greek is styled *Paralipomenon*, and in Hebrew *Dibre-haiamin*, which in our vernacular is expressed by *Words or Things of the Days*; and if we carry the word to its fullest signification means *the things, the deeds and the events.* This book is, so to say, an epitome or compendium of the whole of the sacred Scriptures from the beginning of Genesis to the said book itself, for it is thus that St. Jerome interprets the Greek word *Paralipomenon*; others declare it to be *Psaltermissorum*, that is to say, of the things which were not narrated, or that were passed over in a brief manner in the *Pentateuch*, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. For this does the same doctor declare in the Epistle to Paulinus,[1] that this book is of such great importance that he who thinks that without it he can understand

[1] *Epist.* 103.

the Scriptures is deceived; because in each word and in every arrangement of name is declared many things which in the Book of Kings were not declared, and by it many questions of the New Testament are investigated. In order to undertake this labour and succeed in it, he was minded to attempt another work necessary for this end, as otherwise it would be impossible rightly to carry out the work, and it could only be done on the faith of his forefathers. And this work was nothing less than to visit, and examine with his own eyes, the whole tract of Palestine, searching out all its places, cities, towns, mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, springs, and, in a word, all that is found mentioned in the province. And so that this study be carried out with greater security and certitude, he took with him some experts among the Hebrews, men brought up in the land itself, and experienced and learned in the sacred Scriptures. Because this business of investigating proper names and things which are of so great antiquity, and moreover subject to so many changes, due to time, to variations (whether from the will of princes or from the fury of the enemies), to the action of storms, fires, winds, and overflow of waters, which sweep away and destroy all things, cast down, break up, crush, burn, and submerge, becomes a very difficult matter, and one which requires, together with the experience of years and knowledge of letters, a very mature judgment to carry out.

The doctor himself manifests to us both the difficulty and the advantage. Let us hear him in the Epistle which he wrote to Damian and Rogatian: "In the same way," he says, "as those can better understand Greek histories who have visited Athens, and have understood the third of the *Æneid* of Virgil, who from within have navigated along Epirus, and passed its promontory, the mountains Acroceraunos, and, reaching to Sicily from thence have arrived to

where the Tiber flows into the sea by the Port of Ostia; so also in like manner will he see more clearly into the sacred Scriptures who has gazed with his own eyes upon Judea, and has considered the remains of the ancient cities, attained to the knowledge of their primitive names, and those into which they have been changed: for this reason did I set store and took the trouble to visit, together with men who were learned among the Hebrews, the whole province which is constantly mentioned in the Church of Christ. I confess to you, my beloved Damian and Rogatian, that I have never trusted to my genius, nor followed my own opinion in things relating to the divine books; hence, even as regards such things of which I deemed I had already obtained safe information, I did not disdain to make further inquiries, how much more in such things of which I was doubtful. And whereas by your letters you had pressed me with haste to put into Latin the *Book of the Chronicles*, I obtained the services of a very learned man among the Hebrews to come to me from the city of Tiberias, who was held by them to be well versed in the law. I have conferred with him upon all points touching this my purpose, and thus have satisfied myself, and have attempted the work you have enjoined me to do. I confess openly to you that this book of *names*, both in the Greek and in the Latin, is so corrupted and full of mistakes that it appears rather to be a confused heap of Sarmatian and barbarous names than Hebrew ones. But the blame of this must not be laid on the seventy interpreters, for these, full of the divine Spirit, translated what was true, but must be laid on the bad copyists, who out of what was true drew falsehoods, and oftentimes out of three names, by removing some syllables, abbreviated them, and made only one; others, on the contrary, judging the names long, out of one made three." At the end of the prologue he

says as follows: "He who should feel inclined to reprehend anything of this interpretation, let him first inquire of the Hebrews, and consider the question well, and attend to the coherence of the text and words, and then reprehend, if he will, and murmur at this my work."

This careful diligence of our doctor was of great advantage, because such as are versed in both the sacred and profane histories teach that, without the knowledge of places, their situation, and proper names, both ancient and modern, it is like working blindfolded. Twice does the holy doctor prove having done so, and how in his memory he had ever before him the things of that province: this is found in the two records which have remained to us of these journeys, the one being the Epistle to Eustochium[1] on the life of her mother St. Paula, wherein he shows much of what there is in the province of Palestine, pointing out in a brief manner what is more noteworthy and more proper to the office of a good chronologist, and in which in my opinion none excel him. The other is in one to Dardanus,[2] and this is one of the fullest and gravest epistles we have of the saint, and wherein he declares the secret of the land of promise: what sacrament was enclosed therein, what land it was which in spirit and in truth had been promised. He likewise reveals that although the foundation of this history is in fact laid in that material land, yet the thoughts of God were not limited to it, nor were the so greatly prized promises circumscribed to its limits. He proves this, because in the sayings of Moses and in the Prophets many things are found which do not correspond with the land, but that they nevertheless reveal, with an admirable light, that beneath them is hidden heaven and the divine mystery which is being prepared for us. To this purpose he tells us an infinite number of things with

[1] *Epist.* 27. [2] *Epist.* 129.

such subtlety and condensation, that in order to expound them much space would be needed. Such as read through this lengthy epistle of St. Jerome's will observe that all was a figure of the spiritual things promised to the legitimate sons of Abraham, children of promise and of faith, not according to the flesh. The actual material land was not what was in truth promised, nor did the thoughts of God end here: it was a figure, not a reality. By figure is called what is no more than a representation of what has been, and here the representation comes before the truth. Thus does St. Paul teach us[1] in many passages of his epistles. The conclusion of the epistle of our great doctor declares this very grandly. For this reason does he advert to it, and lays great stress that we should not forget that in the many places in the holy Scriptures where we find references to inheritances and riches given to men by God, we should not lay stress on the letter or outward meaning, but that the soul should rise to the interior spirit, to the riches by which the soul is made rich, which neither eye hath seen nor ear heard: let us understand by heaven the influence of the Divine favour, and God's gifts communicated to man; and by the land, human nature; by the fruits, the good works practised by man. This is what David sought to express, when he sings that God blessed the land, and the land yielded its fruits, and concludes singing, *Truth is sprung out of the earth, and justice hath looked down from the heavens.*[2] And St. Paul understanding well all these mysteries, and where all these great promises and blessings were to end, witnessing them fulfilled within himself, and in all those who in truth and in spirit were true Israelites, says, writing to the Ephesians:[3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. As He chose*

[1] 1 Ad Cor. [2] Psalm lxxxv. 11. [3] Ephes. i. 3, 4.

us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. How many things did the doctor of the Gentiles discover to us, did history give us leave to state them here, which I know not how they could be stated in any created language! But what we have taken in this discourse must suffice.

I had also intended in this discourse to have followed his steps, I mean to say, have given a full description of the Holy Land, which he visited so much to the purpose, but I felt and judged it would be outside my purpose, and thus decided to omit it. Should any one desire to go into this more fully, let him seek out Brocardus in the lengthy work he made on this subject. Also Saligniacus brought out another, Brundembachius took up also the subject, and subsequently to all these, and in a very exhaustive manner, Christianus Andricornius. In our language [Spanish] there are likewise several works, nevertheless none have the finished diction of the one found in the Sacred Scheme of the *Biblia Regia* in the book called *Caleb*; because the want of knowledge of the Hebrew language in the authors I have quoted has been the cause that the native names are not written with the accuracy of the last-mentioned work.

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH

St. Jerome composes a Martyrology. The Reason for writing Martyrologies in the Church.

Among the signal services which the talent of St. Jerome rendered to Holy Church, there was one of no mean importance. This was a martyrology. In substance this means, and was, a brief summary and plain narrative of the life and death of martyrs, arranged to suit all days of the year, and which from the name of the months was called the *Kalendar*. The day is stated and the place of their martyrdom, and the kind of martyrdom they suffered. In the Castilian language very little information is found as to the nature of martyrologies, and what foundation and motives there were for having them. As to the cause which moved our saint to do this work, I am inclined to give here some information. One characteristic has the life of our saint, as I have observed before, that there is scarcely any one thing in the Church which has not passed through his hands. I could very well have widened the outlines of his history, had I wished to undertake the investigation of the events of his time, whether they occurred in the affairs of the Church, or in respect to the eastern and western Empires, the Roman State, and the persons who treated with him, giving some details of their lives and deaths, but I considered that this line was very much used by many, and that I might

from them gather what should be outside my purpose; hence I have withdrawn my hand from what is commonplace, which would make me a sort of preacher, or an orator, a thing very distinct from history. Thus I have chosen to treat upon some particular details of the Church, which should be purely connected with our saint, either seeing that they originated with him, or were furthered by him, or again that he had written concerning them. Now, as I have said, this is one very worthy work to make known as being his in the manner we shall see. The occasion which gave rise to the fact of writing martyrologies, which in Latin are called *Kalendars*, by reason that at the heading is given the age of the sun and the moon, was that in the Roman Church, and in other especial ones, it had been usual, ever since the earliest times of the Church, to make a remembrance of the saints who had shed their blood for Christ, or had notably confessed Him with their lives, in the divine offices celebrated in the churches, more especially in the holy sacrifice of the altar, when, in the course of the year, came the anniversary of their birthday, for such was it called, the day of their martyrdom (which was in truth the day of their birth to heaven), and the holy sacrifice was offered in their honour and in their memory. This duty was entrusted to certain persons in the Church, of keeping a memorial of them, so that no day should pass unheeded of the martyr or confessor, and thus their feast and memorial be kept. Grave authors and of great antiquity have left records of this custom in their writings. Tertullian, in the book *De Corona Militis*, distinctly says, *Pro natalitiis annua die faciemus*, which is to say, on their birthdays we shall offer sacrifice once a year. The word *facere* also means *to sacrifice*, which is a word much used, not only by the ancient Latins, but likewise by the writers of the holy Scriptures.

Varro,[1] in his book *De Lingua Latina*, says: *Agnam Jovi facit*, "He sacrifices a ewe lamb to Jupiter." Virgil,[2] *Cum faciam vitulam pro frugibus.* Cicero[3] and Cato, who are princes of the Latin tongue, used the said verb in the same sense; and in the Book of Kings Elias said to the priests of Baal, *Ego faciam bovem alterum*; and then, farther down, *Eligete bovem unum, et facite primi*, from which is clearly seen that the word *facite* means "*Sacrifice to your god an ox, and I will sacrifice another to mine.*" I have willingly drawn attention to this, so that we should in passing comprehend that, when our Redeemer said to His disciples on the night of the Last Supper, after He had offered the sacrifice of His body to the Father: *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem*, not only does He tell them to do what He had done, but by the word *facite* He says, "*Sacrifice* as I have sacrificed: I have sacrificed Myself to the Father, and you have to celebrate and sacrifice My own real and true body and blood"; and the same word did Tertullian employ, penetrating the same sense, when he said *Pro natalitiis annua die faciemus.* And the word *natalitiis* does not mean, as the hapless Renan thought, the birth according to the Gentile sense, but the day when with glorious triumph the martyrs were received into heaven.

This same custom does St. Cyprian[4] testify to in an epistle to the clergy of Carthage, where he says as follows: "Take notice and make a commemoration of the days on which they died [he speaks of the martyrs], so that we may be able to celebrate their memories along with those of other martyrs, notwithstanding that our faithful and most devout brother Tertullian, with that care and solicitude he has of all things, and that he employs in the service of the brethren (for even in what appertains to the body he never

[1] Varro, lib. v.
[2] Virg. *Eclog.* 3.
[3] Cicer. *Pro Muren.*
[4] *Epist.* 37.

forgets), has written to me, and continues to do so, marking the days whereon our blessed brothers have been in the prisons, and those who have passed with glorious triumph and death into immortality: here we celebrate in their commemoration sacrifices and oblations of such as presently by the help of the Lord we shall celebrate with you."

In another epistle,[1] he repeats the same: "Let no one think," he says, "that these offerings and sacrifices were for the liberation from the pains of purgatory, as we do for our dead, because the blood which they shed for Jesus Christ discharged them from all debt, leaving them pure and clean to enter in and enjoy their seats and crowns of glory. This is not to be understood but of the festival days, which, to their glory and honour, were celebrated as we now celebrate them. To Magdalen Christ said that many sins were forgiven her, because she had loved much; and He also said that no man could show greater love than by giving his life for the beloved; hence it is concluded in truth that the martyrs, who gave for their beloved Jesus Christ their lives, remained after this act and trial well purified and sanctified, without stain, nor had they anything to purge, nor for them was sacrifice made. To this purpose St. Augustine, discoursing on St. John, says:[2] "Let us remember them [he speaks of the martyrs] upon the table of the altar, so that they may plead for us, and obtain from God that we may follow their footsteps, because otherwise it would be rather to injure the saints. They have no needs, and we assume them to be needy: we ourselves are the ones who are necessitous." In accordance with this usage, the names of the saints were recited in the mass, and in their recitation there came first the Apostles, and then the martyrs, and (according as it is gathered from St. Augustine

[1] *Epist.* 34.

[2] Tract 84 et Serm. 17. De Verb Apost.

in the book *De Sancta Virginitate*)[1] other saints followed, although they were not martyrs. And I believe that from this remained the custom, as we see, of the names of the saints being mentioned in the canon of the mass even at the present day, the Church selecting such as by the impulse of the Holy Ghost were inserted, so as not to make a long list.

From this fact of the annotations and memorials of the days of the martyrs occasion was taken of writing martyrologies. Great indeed was the number of martyrs who died for Christ during the ten greatest persecutions: their names were written down in all the churches, as well as the days on which they suffered, and even their torments. In those times it was the custom to read out on the eves of festivals their names in the church, as is done now in the calendar, which is read at prime, in order that all should know what feast-day was to be celebrated on the following day, and in whose memory the Sacred Host was to be offered. There were also in the churches boards or panels upon which the list of the saints was written. These Tertullian calls *fasti*, which were great archives of ecclesiastic and profane antiquity: thus does he say in the book *De Corona Militis*: "*Habes tuos census, tuos fastos, nihil tibi cum gaudiis sæculi.* You have your days reckoned up, your annual festivals: you have nothing to do with the joys and festivities of the world." Thus it is also seen that on the feast-days of the martyrs in those early times the faithful rejoiced, and had their banquets and made a feast. These feasts were called *Agapæ*, which means days of love and charity, from which is seen the antiquity of the holy custom still practised in Spain of the people proceeding to the churches dedicated to the martyrs, and the various hermitages, such as those of Sts. Sebastian, Lawrence, Stephen, and many others, and

[1] *De Sancta Virg.* cap. 45.

there partaking of some food in sign of rejoicing, and it is said by that "they give charity."

In the Laodicean Council, in canon xxxviii., it was ordained that this be not done within the church. Thus do we see that many of them at the present day still retain the porches, around which the invited were gathered together.

The first of whom by common accord we have any notice as having done anything in the way of martyrologies was Eusebius of Cæsarea, called also Pamphilius. And our doctor appears to confirm this as a fact in an epistle ascribed to him, which is found among his works, and with his name, which was sent to Chromatius and Heliodorus, a document which has however been doubted as being his. It is affirmed also by Bede[1] in his book on the Acts of the Apostles, and by Wilfred Strabo in his work *Of the Affairs of the Church*, and after him by all modern writers, and in a more especial manner by John Molanus[2] in his book *De Martyrologio*. The above-quoted authors, after declaring Eusebius to be the first, make St. Jerome the second. They add that Jerome translated the one written in Greek by Eusebius into Latin; and the actual words of Bede are in the already-mentioned place. Strabo says as follows: "Jerome, following Eusebius of Cæsarea, composed the martyrology for the course of the year at the petition of the two bishops Chromatius and Heliodorus. The occasion was when the Emperor Theodosius attended the council of the bishops, and then greatly praised Gregory, Bishop of Cordova, because in his daily mass he made a memento and named the martyrs who had suffered and died on each day." These are the very words of Strabo, and are taken from the text of the epistles

[1] *Retract. super Act.* Apost. cap. 1.
[2] Molanus, *De Martyr.* c. 2.

which are found at the heading of the martyrologies as preface.

The reply to the letter, which is ascribed to St. Jerome, is long, and among many other things says as follows: "When the Emperor Constantine entered the city of Cæsarea, he bade the holy bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea ask for what he should judge convenient for the needs of the Church of his city; and it is written that Eusebius replied in this wise—My Lord, wealth enough has my Church, therefore I have no need to ask for any favours for her. But for a great length of time I have greatly desired that with much solicitude and diligence search be made in the archives of the audience courts and tribunals not only of the city of Rome, but all other places subject to the Roman Empire, for the processes and causes and suits which had been fulminated by the judges of these and other courts against the saints of the Lord, and what martyrs there were, and under what princes and judges they were judged and condemned, in what provinces and cities, on what days, and with what perseverance in passion they obtained the palm of martyrdom; and that having drawn all this and written down all these extracts from the said archives, these documents be sent on to me." He farther on adds in the epistle that Eusebius, as faithful narrator of these events, wrote the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and furthermore says: "Whereas for each day there are more than 890 names of martyrs mentioned in the various provinces and cities, so much so that there is no day in the year which has not assigned to it 500, except the first day in January." And at the end he says: "In order to prevent the weariness of so prolix a task, I will recount the chief among them in their proper dates, as in this small book is contained." It suffices to have quoted the above from this epistle, to see and gather the truth. Cassiodorus, in the book *On the*

Divine Institutions, says as follows :[1] "Read oftentimes the way of future blessedness; read the lives of the Fathers, the confessions of the faithful, and the passion of the martyrs, which things among others you will find in the epistle which St. Jerome sent to Chromatius and Heliodorus and those who have flourished throughout the world, in order that, encouraged by these, their imitation may carry us to the kingdom of heaven." From this is seen the great antiquity and authority of these epistles, since they bear that name and testimony of Cassiodorus and Wilfred Strabo, authors of many hundred years back, Cassiodorus having flourished in the year 558. But whereas it appears to many learned men of these times that these epistles are not authentic but falsehoods under sham titles, it is as well to understand the reasons for their foundation, which in my judgment are conclusive. As for me, I am convinced after hearing Chromatius, Heliodorus, and Jerome speaking, that these letters are not theirs, in the same way as in place of a politician and a man of lofty mind one were to substitute a barbarian and shepherd boy.[2] Doubtless such are mistaken who think[3] that the book *Of the Martyrs*, written by Eusebius of Cæsarea, was a brief summary in the manner of a martyrology, and for this reason they have made him the author of them. As a proof of this we have no need of any but himself, who so oftentimes mentions this work in his histories, and teaches clearly what it was, and what he did. The case was in truth this, according to a very probable conjecture, that St. Jerome read these books of Eusebius, and out of them made a brief summary, recapitulating the points and the substance, and this he sent to the two bishops, Chromatius

[1] Cassiod. *De Divin. Inst.* cap. 32.

[2] Marian. 9, tom. *Operum S. Hieron.*

[3] Joan Molanus, præfat. in Usuard.; Cæsar Baron., præfat. in *Martyrol.*, et t. 5 *Annallum Eccles.*

and Heliodorus. And from this is concluded that St. Jerome was the first who set, in form and style the martyrologies, at least in the churches of the last named.

Gelasius refers in the Roman Council that it was not permitted in the Church of Rome for histories concerning the martyrs to be read, as had been up to that time the custom; because, owing to the impious and cruel edicts of Diocletian, the most precious relics which the world contained, were consigned to the fire, ordering with furious hate the books of the Christians to be burnt. This is recounted by Eusebius in lib. viii., by Arnobius, Optatus, and others.[1] Nevertheless, some tables and minutes remained, which had been concealed, or were passed over unnoticed, and some portions which devout persons had preserved secretly, some through devotion, and others from holy curiosity, and thus out of these relics was re-formed and continued the martyrology, which bears the same stamp of antiquity as the commencement of the Church itself, for it came from the time of St. Clement, the disciple of St. Peter.

In course of time this was enriched from St. Jerome's day, our great doctor, up to the present time, by the diligence of learned men, pious and saintly. Hence this is one of the principal things we have to thank St. Jerome for, as appears on the authority of Cassiodorus, above quoted, which is very weighty; and if to this we add that of St. Gregory, Pope,[2] it suffices to render it perfectly confirmed.

In an epistle he wrote to Eulogius, Bishop of Alexandria, he says as follows: "We have nearly all the names of the martyrs with their individual passions and martyrdoms for each one of the days collected together in one volume, and we celebrate their memories in the office of the mass; but we have not the statements in this book

[1] Lib. viii. 2.

[2] Grego. lib. vii., *Epist. indicion.* 1, *Epist.* 29.

of the kind of martyrdom each endured, but only the place and the day of their passion, and, as I have said, we know each day how many saints in various lands and provinces were crowned with the diadem of martyrdom; yet I think that your beatitude possesses the same there in your Church." From these words we learn from St. Gregory that this book of the martyrology had been spread throughout the Church, since he holds it as certain that it existed in Alexandria, and that from it various transcripts had been taken, which had become dispersed throughout the world, and, since there exists no proof of any author, either remote or modern, having done this but St. Jerome, I mean, set in form and curtailed to an epilogue of days of the week, it is seen clearly that it was this which the holy doctor Jerome sent from the east to Italy, although subsequently there were additions made and revised and improved, which was easy to do, after the initial work was done, for each Church to add its saints. Later on were added not only martyrs, but also holy doctors, confessors, and virgins. Thus it increased to such a degree that each Church had its own martyrology, from which arose also that the office was much varied, so as to give admittance to their particular feasts. At least we must say that, although it was in Rome that these martyrologies had their birth, and their commencement due to the care and solicitude of popes and notaries, the form and the manner followed is that of St. Jerome throughout the Church, and together with this he enriched it with what he sent to be added from the labours of Eusebius to those great ones existing which were already in Rome. At the present day this martyrology is dispersed about, and known under the joint titles of St. Jerome and Eusebius, although I doubt not but that it is so disfigured and altered that the saint himself would not recognise it, and I am of opinion that

the judgment of Molanus is in part true that this martyrology is the one composed by Usuardus at the petition of Charlemagne, joining it to all that came to hand from St. Jerome, Bede, Florus, and others. Such as would wish to know more in detail respecting this question will do well to read this author in the part quoted, and Cardinal Cæsar Baronius in his *Commentaries on the Martyrologies.*

DISCOURSE THE SIXTH

Of the many Treatises and Epistles which St. Jerome wrote at the Petition of various Persons whilst in Bethlehem.

Like to a new sun did St. Jerome shine forth from the cave of Bethlehem, where he had established his dwelling, close to that humble crib upon which had been laid the wealth of the heavens. To Jerome resorted all such as desired their salvation, and such as were yearning to put off their ignorance. He was assailed by some with letters, and by others to see him, and to be taught by his voice. Such as could not come, either by reason of distance, or on account of their duties and the offices they filled, or from their state in life, ceased not to importune him with letters, and craved from him solutions of difficulties and questions, and expositions of texts from the holy Scriptures.

Almighty God awakened these desires in the souls of many persons, in order that His servant Jerome should be roused from the sleep of contemplation and his own individual bent of life, enclosed and humble, to the general good of the Church; because He had not set so brilliant a light in that spot for it to be hidden and take pleasure to itself alone. Before proceeding farther I wish to observe one thing, and that is to make known the deep humility of this man at once so saintly and so learned that he never attempted to preach in public, neither when a priest

in Antioch nor when a cardinal at Rome, nor even when later on he dwelt in Bethlehem.

I know not with what words to qualify our own audacity in preaching when—I will not say we have not the knowledge he had or his sanctity either, but when we are totally ignorant and our own lives so ordinary and so listless, yet we pretend to do so with such boldness, and set ourselves in the pulpit of Christ with such little sufficiency, yet as confidently as though we knew more than Jerome: we stand forth there bereft of good theology, ignorant of the holy Scriptures, without knowledge of languages—I do not say of Greek and Hebrew, but of Latin—and even of our native tongue, without having studied the art of speaking well, but merely having studied a few folios purchased at the shops we fill the churches with our voices, we thunder forth from the pulpits, and even carry the people after us!

St. Jerome, his mind and soul full of all that is deficient in us, yet never dared to ascend the pulpit! Great indeed was his humility, as great as is our vanity; indeed I think I cannot exaggerate it. I only find that St. Jerome wrote thirty-nine homilies on St. Luke (lost to our sorrow is this great treasure!), for although *homilia* means *colloquium*, or reasoning made in the congregation, there is no proof that he delivered them in public, I mean to say in any city or town: possibly he may have delivered them to his monks in the monastery of Bethlehem. He mentions these homilies in the catalogue *De viris illustribus*, placing them at the end of all, and, counting the works he had written down to that date, which was the fourteenth year of the Empire of Theodosius, and of our Lord 392. What marvel that he should hesitate at preaching who had not dared to approach the altar as a priest, and with equal humility also hesitated to write, and all that we have of his was drawn out at the sheer pleadings of friends and saintly persons, that is to say, these books

were births and offsprings of the spirit of humility deeply rooted, which were brought forth at the power of prayer and meditation! What marvel that from these roots should come branches which should reach heaven, and that the birds of loftiest flight should come and rest upon them? Evagrius, a learned man and a great friend of Jerome's, besought him from Antioch to write down his opinion in regard to Melchisedech, forasmuch as some held that he was the Holy Ghost,[1] and others that he was an angel, or of other nature superior to man. Jerome replied destroying this error, and proves it by drawing forth the Hebrew origin, which says he was like the rest of men, a pure man, and, according to the sentence of some Hebrews he was said to be Sem, the first-born of father Noe, and who at the time he blessed Abraham was of the age of 390, and many other things does he teach in this epistle to his great friend Evagrius. And whereas there arises an occasion of speaking of this holy man, it is well to observe here that there were two men called Evagrius. One at Antioch, holy and pious, the friend of Jerome, who through his merits came to be bishop of that city, after the death of Paulinus, and it was this one to whom he addressed the reply respecting Melchisedech. The other was Ponticus Hyperborites, at one time the disciple of St. Gregory Nazianzen, and Deacon of Constantinople. He greatly favoured the errors of Origen, and was the great friend of Palladius, Rufinus, and of Melania, and not content with following so evil a doctrine invented another novel one, and other things, which any one desirous of further knowledge may read in Jerome's Epistle to Tesiphontes. Therefore this Evagrius is not to be confounded with Evagrius the friend of Jerome.

Fabiola had besought of Jerome the explanation of the

[1] *Epist.* 126.

forty-two mansions, and, whereas he had been unable to satisfy her pleadings during her lifetime, he consecrated this labour to her memory after her death, being then in Bethlehem. Fabiola likewise requested him to declare the sacerdotal vesture of the old synagogue. He did so,[1] and, in order to grasp better the subject, he commences with the most important of the ancient sacrifices, and declares first the sense of the letter and history, as he did in the exposition of the mansions; secondly, the spirit and the truth. In these treatises St. Jerome joins together brevity and elegance, and with such skill that I venture to say he far outshone all writers, whether ancient or modern—there is no word which he might have suppressed, no negligence, or a single word without its mystery. What he says of others perfectly fits him in a higher degree, so that such as become converted to the Lord with ease can remove the veil from the countenance of Moses, because as His law is spiritual, and He is a Spirit, so does the letter die which kills, and the Spirit rises up that gives life. As David asked, when he said: "Lord, clean my eyes, remove the veil from them, and I will consider the marvels of Thy Law." This is indeed a singular epistle,[2] it teaches much in a few sentences; adding to it another epistle he wrote to Marcella, who had asked him from Rome to declare what thing was the *Ephod-bad* and what the *Teraphim*, there will be found a complete definition of what appertains to these sacerdotal vestures and ornaments, and the sacred ceremonies; in the book called *Aaron* will be found what here might not be so clear. To the same Marcella he also declares in another epistle[3] the ten divine names which are found in the Hebrew, while in another epistle he declares to her what is meant by the Greek *Diapsalmon* and the Hebrew *Sela*, which is so frequently used in the

[1] *Epist.* 128. [2] *Epist.* 130. In *Biblia Regia.* [3] *Epist.* 136.

Psalms. At the pleadings of the same holy matron he made a very learned exposition of the Psalm 126, *Nisi Dominus Œdificaverit Domum.* Also the epistle wherein he declares what is the sin *in spiritum Sanctum*, and many other things, for, as she was a matron of so great sanctity and lofty intelligence, Jerome took great pleasure in serving her in things of such gravity.[1] At the request of the priest Cyprian he commented on Psalm 89, *Domine refugium factus es nobis*, in accordance with the Hebrew text and the translation of the Septuagint. The holy virgin Principia besought of him the exposition of Psalm 44, *Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum*, and there[2] he gives her the reason, and excuses himself for writing to virgins and matrons (which we have already touched upon), that it was because he found in them a greater desire for understanding the divine mysteries than he did in men. For, had men asked him these questions, he would not be speaking with women. It was the women who awakened him and besought and pleaded with questions which required to be replied, and it was not in reason he should refuse to accede to their holy pleadings. Here comes to my mind what occurred in the life of our Saviour, for, if we examine it attentively, we will find that with none of the Hebrew people did He discuss the divine mysteries so clearly and so deeply as at the well of Samaria with a lowly woman. God spoke to Nicodemus by night and in signs and metaphors, yet he was a learned man, and of good intentions, although at the time these words of God were obscure to his soul, and dark; but with the Samaritan woman he spoke very clearly. Speaking to her He spoke those loving words: "Oh! if thou didst but know who it is that speaketh to thee and what is the gift of God," and, point by point, He draws her on until He discloses

[1] *Epist.* 139. [2] *Epist.* 140.

Himself to her and says—"*I am the Messias whom you await!*"

Now this statement I do not find He ever made to any other person, and the reason of this, let him consider it who will, for through the speech of our saint it is easy to find.

Minnerius and Alexander, two great servants of God, monks of Egypt, asked of him by letter[1] some difficult passages in St. Paul's Epistles, in particular the text in the first to the Corinthians: "*We shall all sleep, but not all be changed*," on account of the divergence found in the copies; and taking advantage of this occasion, he wrote a beautiful treatise on the end of the world, on the last judgment, and the resurrection of the body. Amandus, another priest, importuned him to clear away for him many other difficulties. Sunnia and Fratella wrote to Jerome from Germany beseeching him to declare to them in what consisted the difference between the Greek and Latin versions of the Psalms, and teach them which of the two is most conformable to the Hebrew and more worthy of being followed. St. Jerome greatly esteemed this desire (which in truth is much to be esteemed). He replied by a long and very learned epistle,[2] in which he satisfied them, and praises with joy the fact that so barbarous and rude a people as are the Getæ and the Germans, who are more given to warfare and inclined to the clamour of the army than to tenderness of spirit and the calm of the divine letters, should seek with greater solicitude the Hebrew text than the Greek nation, so greatly addicted since ancient times to study. The holy doctor infers here that the question is not in being of this or that nationality, because God is not an acceptor of persons, as St. Peter defined, but in the fact that He manifests Himself to all who seek and desire Him,

[1] *Epist.* 251. [2] *Epist.* 135.

and to them He benignly gives and delivers His gifts. To this purpose does Jerome tell them at the beginning of the epistle, in loving and courteous words, how rejoiced he had been to find women of so warlike a people placed in such occupation, and with so earnest a desire, that from Germany they should send to Syria such questions to be defined. From this is also inferred the great renown of St. Jerome, a poor monk enclosed in a cell of Bethlehem, yet sought out from the remotest parts of the world by men and women. Hedibia and Algasia do likewise from France : they sent messengers and proposed questions of importance. These are replied to,[1] and thus Jerome delivers out of their difficulties all who resort to him. Paulinus the priest also importuned him with other grave questions. And in order to avoid any mistake in reference to the Paulinus of whom in the course of this history we have had occasion to mention (and in the epistles and writings of our saint there are found various works), it must be adverted that the first Paulinus was Bishop of Antioch, and the one who ordained our saint, and came with him to Rome : the same who had the disputes with Meletius, and who was succeeded after his death by Evagrius. Another, the second Paulinus, was a great Roman senator, consul-general by reason of his great virtue and prudence ; he was the disciple of Ausonius, a celebrated poet, and who subsequently left all things and, contemning the things of the world, and even poetry itself and other elegant studies, was minded to enter the monastic life. He consulted with Jerome on the spot to be selected by letters, because he had formed the intention of coming with him to the Holy Land, and the saint dissuaded him from it ; for he fully realised the great advantage it would be for Italy that he should remain and exercise there his authority. On

[1] *Epist.* 150 and 151.

this subject Jerome wrote to him a very learned and eloquent epistle,[1] in which he gives him the rule of life in a monastic order as to its chief points, and persuades him to undertake the study of the holy Scriptures because he himself had an elegant style. For this same individual Jerome declares in an another epistle[2] two questions which he had proposed. At last this Paulinus became the renowned great Bishop of Nola, so lauded by St. Augustine and other learned doctors. Quite distinct from either of these was the third Paulinus, to whom Jerome addressed the celebrated epistle which is found at the beginning of the Bible, wherein he persuades him to come to the Holy Land, contrariwise to what he had urged the other Paulinus,[3] whence is seen that they were different men, although some seem to think they were the same; but they are in error, since they fail to perceive that these two epistles advise contrary things—one that he should not come to the Holy Land, and the other to come, both individuals being at the proper age to choose the life or state to be followed. This is in brief the history of the various Paulinus, so that we should make no mistake. In a word, wheresoever there were learned men, wherever there were good desires and grave affairs and questions to be treated upon in Rome, in Egypt, Germany, Africa, France, or Spain in respect to the sacred Scriptures, or any difficulty arose, the solution or remedy was to seek Jerome, and resort to the cave of Bethlehem for the food of doctrine, which was the bread Jeremiah wept over, because there was no one to break it for the little ones!

In order to see the activity, the crowd of things, which came to Bethlehem, and the labours that were thereby imposed upon the saintly doctor to carry through, let us hear his confession, drawn from him, so to say, under

[1] *Epist.* 13. [2] *Epist.* 153. [3] Marian, in argument, *Epist.* 103.

torture. Writing to the second Paulinus above mentioned, in the aforequoted epistle, he says as follows at the commencement: "With loud voice you awaken me to write, and with your own eloquence you terrify me, for in the diction you employ in your epistles you represent me to be a Cicero. You complain to me that I only send you little short epistles written carelessly. This does not proceed from negligence, but from the fear you have inspired in me, for, did I send you many words, you would find much to correct, and, to tell you the simple truth, in this shipload which is being prepared now to forward to the West I have been demanded so many replies to letters that, were I to reply to all that I am asked for, I should find it impossible to satisfy; therefore I strive—putting aside elegance and good diction, as well as the desires of such as address me—to reply just what first occurs to me. And, when I send you my letters, I do it not considering you as a judge, but as a friend." Of this pressure of work and frequent calls upon his time and genius does Jerome complain in many places. I omit to mention many other epistles and treatises forwarded to many persons on various and difficult matters.

Amid many other things which are marvels that we discover in the life of this great doctor, one thing indeed which commands our deep consideration is to observe how he speaks to and measures swords with all classes, popes, monks, priests, consuls, senators, virgins, widows, and married people; yet to each one he is fully able to reply and advise; with all propriety and keeping decorum, he investigates and penetrates each case, and lucidly advises, as though in each state he had been well exercised in its office and foreseen its aims. This qualification is also observed in other holy doctors, because God has set them as beacons and lights, to illumine such as do not know so

much; but in no one with such brilliancy as in Jerome. Whoever considers and witnesses how he speaks with married people—a state absolutely different to his own—and should listen to his advice, rules, documents for the family, children, servants, the plan and the arrangement of the household, and how notwithstanding all these duties they can have recourse to prayer at proper times and practise the exercise of pious works, he would be inclined to believe that he himself had been a married man all his life. On the other hand, when we find him revealing the malice and wretched dealings of priests, the omissions of the bishops, the negligences of the monks, the bold ways of widows, and the freedom of single women, there is no one but would be fain to say he had been watching them, or that he had a *familiar spirit* which revealed and discovered all this to him. But it was naught else but that God dealt towards him in the manner He had done in other times with His prophets when He wished to reprehend and punish the evil customs of His people. God would instil into him, as He had done into them, terms and words so vivid, so significant of vice and malice, that it would seem they were in the midst of it all. For instance, who taught Isaias to name, and mention in detail, with such significant expressions the decking-out and manners of the worldly dressed-up women and lovers of Israel as he depicts them in every point? Similarly does God act now, and always has done, in the Church with His saintly preachers! Who that would behold Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory, Bernard, and others revealing the malice and the evil doings of all the states of life we have already mentioned—a thing they themselves were very far from following—but would have to admit that this language was not learned in the ordinary way? Many preachers of our time vaunt loudly that they could do the same very vividly themselves. Let us hope

in God that these latter have not acquired this knowledge by other paths than that one followed by the saints! For the effects do not appear to be the same. As we were proceeding to speak of the occupations and the haste that was forced on Jerome that he had barely time to reply to the demands upon him, despite that his facility in doing so and his promptitude was very great, hence they were always ahead of him, who could believe that a man could be found of such skill as to be able to translate in three days from Hebrew into Latin the books of Solomon—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles? To be able to read them simply within this time is a great deal. Yet Jerome himself affirms that he did so. Let us hear him in the Epistle to Chromatius and Heliodorus, to whom he addresses the preface to these books. "Let the letter be joined to such as are united in the priesthood, or, rather better said, do not divide the epistle among those who are gathered together by the love of Christ. The *Commentaries* on Osee, Amos, Zacharias, and Malachias which you have asked me for, I would willingly write, did my sickness permit. Send me assistance for the cost, and support my copyist, in order that my genius and pen may be principally employed in your service; but I am surrounded by those who demand many things, as though it were just that I should labour for others when you yourselves are in need, or in a question of obligation and of contract I should deem myself the debtor of any others but yourselves. Hence, although broken in health by a long illness, yet so that the whole year be not passed in silence and dumbness towards you, I have dedicated in your name a labour of only three days, which was the translation of three books of Solomon—*Miste*, which the Hebrews call *parables*, and in the vulgate translation *Proverbs*; *Koheleth*, which the Greeks call *Ecclesiastes*, and we in

Latin call *Concionator*; and *Sir of Sirin*, which in our vernacular means *Canticle of Canticles*."

Despite that this quickness of translation reveals great facility and knowledge of both languages, and a deep comprehension of the holy Scriptures, I think what he did at the request of his disciple Eusebius of Cremona far more wonderful. He was bound to proceed to Italy, but he did not wish to start without some gift from his master; hence Eusebius begged Jerome to give him some declaration on St. Matthew, and he so prevailed upon him that in the space of a fortnight (a thing almost incredible) he wrote the *Commentaries* which are in the Church and are read with so much profit; and forasmuch as the preface written by the master himself to his disciple affords us a testimony of this statement and is very erudite, I wish to insert here some part. It commences thus: "Whereas many set store on arranging the history of those things, which we see fulfilled in ourselves, according as we are told by those who from the commencement saw them and were ministers of the said word; and the monuments and relics which up to the present have continued and been explained, because being composed by various authors were the beginnings of divers sects, such as is the gospel called by the Egyptian that of St. Thomas, St. Matthias, of St. Bartholomew, and, lastly of all, of the Twelve Apostles; that of Basilides and Apelles, and of many more, which would be too long to count; and it suffices to say at present of all of them that there were some who without the Spirit of God and without His grace wearied themselves rather to arrange and weave out tales than to write a true history, to which fits well the words of the prophet: 'Alas! for those who prophesy out of their heads, and walk according to their own spirit, and say, *The Lord saith* and *the Lord did not send them*.'"

After these words he proceeds on to a full discourse to prove that there are no more than four Evangelists, and that all else is apocryphal and even dangerous, full of the malice of heretics, and then says: "I greatly marvel, beloved Eusebius, why wishing so soon to depart for Rome you desire to take with you such forage from me for the journey as a brief commentary of St. Matthew, collected together in words to expound its sense? Were you to bear in mind my reply, you would not ask me to do in a few days what is a labour of many years. Because, as to the first, it is a difficult thing to read all those who have written gospels; more difficult still after this to draw out what with mature judgment was selected as best. It is true to say that many years ago I did read twenty-two volumes of Origen upon St. Matthew, which are many homilies [this is a kind of divided commentary and as a sort of extract], and the commentaries of Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch; of Hippolytus, martyr; and of Theodorus of Heraclea, of Apollinaris of Laodicea, of Didymus of Alexandria, and of the Latins, Hilary and Victorinus, and the treatises of Fortunatiæn; out of all which, however little I might extract, I would write something worthy of being remembered. Yet you, in two weeks and with Easter approaching, the winds already rising, constrain me to dictate when there is no time for the copyists to write, or to make a fair copy, revise, arrange, or digest. Moreover, you are well aware that for the last three months I am harassed by this long sickness and am now only just beginning to walk; neither can such a large work be done properly within so short a time. However, omitting the authority of the ancients, since it is not possible for me to read or follow them, I have continued the interpretation of the letter and the history, which was the chief thing you besought me, interspersing

at times the flowers of the spiritual sense, keeping for another occasion a future work which will be more perfect; and, if God gives me a longer life, and you comply with the promise you have made me of returning, then I would make an effort to carry out what remains to be done; or better said, there remains at present only the foundations and part of the walls raised in order to place later on the top a handsome dome or crown to the work, and then you will see the difference that exists between a hasty stroke of the pen at dictation, and mature diligence and careful writing. For certainly you know very well—and I should be ashamed to call you as a witness to an untruth—that I composed the treatise with such haste that you oftentimes thought not that I wrote anything of mine, but that I read out some one else's work. Do not imagine I say this through arrogance, or because I trust much to my own genius, but that I wish you to understand how much you can prevail on me, since I esteem less that my name should be depreciated among the learned than deny you what with so much instance you desire me to do. Hence I pray you that, if the style should not be so finished, nor the periods fall with the usual cadence, to ascribe it to haste and not to ignorance. I enjoin you, when you reach Rome, to give a copy to the virgin of Christ, Principia, who has begged of me to write something on the Canticles of Solomon; and deprived of doing this through the long illness I have protracted my hopes, binding upon you this law—that if you deny to her what I have written for you, she in like manner will lock up in her desk what has or shall be written for her." In the preface of the second book of his commentaries on the Epistle to the Ephesians, writing to Paula and Eustochium excusing himself for the uncultured style, he says that he does not assume to do more than declare the mysteries of holy

Scriptures, without polishing much the words, because on many days what he writes exceeds a thousand verses; and this he does in order to bring to a conclusion the commentaries on the Apostle. I have willingly transcribed here this statement so that men may see the truth of what I said, and also to show the wit and pithiness with which the saint expresses it. We might well say of him what David sang about himself when he compared his tongue to the pen of a scrivener; and similarly, as the pen without any effort of itself leaves written on the parchment what the right hand running along leaves with its words, so also the tongue uttered the words which the Divine Spirit inspired, sown in the air; and, although not in so excellent a degree, in a manner we may say the same of St. Jerome. We also perceive from his words how assailed he was constantly by continued illness, due to the rough usage he gave his body, and the hard life he endured through his unsatiable thirst for penance. Few indeed were the years that his emaciated body was not attacked by sickness and tried in many other ways: hair shirts, fastings, chains, lengthened prayer, and the exercise he imposed upon himself between times of washing the feet of all who in such numbers resorted to him.

I surmise that it was from here that our saintly doctor wrote what he did on the Canticles of Solomon, this literary treasure having been lost to us together with many other writings. In the catalogue of his works he mentions two homilies on the Canticles. Some assert that these were what he transcribed from Origen, although when it is no more than a transcript he always mentions the fact, as may be observed in that same catalogue; hence I am inclined to believe that both these homilies were his own, and that at the time he had written no others, for, as we have seen, this was in the fourteenth year of the Empire

of Theodosius, and subsequently, as he lived a long life, he might have finished the rest. And in passing I will say what I think in regard to the *Commentaries* which are scattered about mixed with his works on St. Mark, and what is the opinion of such as have investigated this well. All students are at one who have studied the diction of St. Jerome, that these *Commentaries* are not his, but that they were engrafted on his works many years ago. This they prove by many reasons; and the first, let it be the obvious one, the great difference which exists in the language, for we can never admit that a learned man and one so wise can forget his manner of speaking, and should change it so unwarrantably from his usual style of writing that it should appear as that of another man. He who should not feel this must needs know little, and not understand what difference there is between the manner of expressing himself of a learned man and that of one who is not. The style of the man who wrote these *Commentaries* is of one who only knew Latin fairly well, Greek very little, and Hebrew not at all; therefore, how could St. Jerome so altogether forget his learning? Even should he have done it on purpose, he would have been betrayed in many places. Moreover, St. Jerome, albeit he at times did not care to be so very polished as his diction usually was, yet he is careful never to appear either as a barbarian or as an ignoramus, much of which is to be found in this exposition of St. Mark, things most unworthy to be attributed to so polished an intellect and judgment as was that of St. Jerome. Never could St. Jerome say, although he should speak in his sleep, that *Pascha* signifies *transitus*, and *Phase* signifies *immolatio*, as says the author of these *Commentaries* on Chapter XIV. And that *Nardum Pisticam* is the same as *Misticam*. These *Commentaries* also have many sentences extremely contrary to those of the saintly doctor; and what is more noteworthy,

in Chapter XV. there are quoted fragments of verses of Sedulius on the form of the Cross. Sedulius is later than our doctor by some years, since it is hardly possible that at the time of Jerome's death he should have been born, which was about the year 430. In Chapter XV. he affirms that St. Mark says correctly that Christ was crucified at the hour of Terce, because at the hour of Sext, so great was the darkness that the Jews were unable to read the title on the Cross. In this manner there are a hundred other things; thus I have no doubt that these *Commentaries* were not his, nor indeed would Jerome gain anything by their being attributed to him, except with such persons as deem more the quantity of books than that they should be good, and well and carefully finished; as though works of greatness of spirit and objects of genius should be given out by weight and cart-loads. Jerome about this time wrote many other things, and we know that in the year above stated, after the birth of the Saviour 392, and the fourteenth of Theodosius, he had written a *Chronicon* of Universal History: it was called *Chronicon* in Greek, as we should say *annales*, relating in brief the events according to the course of time by the consecutive years, keeping great precision, which is the soul of history. In this work he makes no reference to the history he translated of Eusebius of Cæsarea from Greek into Latin, yet it is certain he did do so during the reigns of the Emperors Theodosius and Gratian, as is proved by himself in a preface he set to this very translation. And to avoid any mistakes, it must be observed that this *Chronicon* of Universal History of Eusebius is not the work in ten volumes which now is called the *Ecclesiastical History*, because these were translated by Rufinus of Aquileia, but the *Chronica Universalia*; and, in order to see the truth of this, and what it was that the holy doctor did in this work, let us hear his own

words in the preface. "Let it be noticed," he says, "that in this work I at times act the office of interpreter, at others of author, because sometimes I translate the Greek faithfully, at other times I add what I judge be wanting, more especially in the *Historia Romana*, which Eusebius wrote, who was the author of this work, not because he was ignorant (for he was very erudite), but because, as he wrote the Greek version, he judged it was little to the purpose. So much was this the case that from Ninus and Abraham to the Fall of Troy it is no more than a translation of Greek into Latin; and from the Fall of Troy down to the twentieth year of the reign of Constantine I more often added, and at other times mingled, what I drew from Tranquillus and other illustrious historians with all precision. From the aforesaid date down to the consulships of Augustus, of Valens VI., and Valentinian the Second, all is my own. I deemed best to end here, reserving the later times of Gratian and Theodosius to form a larger history. Not that I had any fear of writing of the living freely and truly (may the fear of God cast out that of man!), but because, owing to the fury of the barbarians which is disturbing the whole earth, all things are in an uncertain state, without knowing how things will end." All this is Jerome's.

And in the epistle[1] on the right way of interpreting which he writes to Pammachius, he openly confesses the same, and brings forward this very preface to Eusebius, and mentions some words from it. In Daniel[2] he quotes the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, translated by himself. Let it be observed here by the diligent student of history that the *Chronicon* of Eusebius and Jerome, which now is in circulation, is very distinct from the one made by these two most grave authors: the negligence of the copyists

[1] *Epist.* 101. [2] Hieron. in Daniel, cap. 9.

erased the lines and the letters of various colours which the holy doctor set for the clear understanding of this work; hence, without this affix, which was very important, as appears by the preface itself, occurred what the same doctor said, that, in order to avoid the weariness of drawing the lines and setting the various colours, in place of a *Chronicon* it became a labyrinth. In this manner, to our great sorrow, it became changed into another form, bold and ungainly, and thus blame is cast by reason of its infinite absurdities on men who are blameless, excepting for having foolishly laboured for so ungrateful a people. Let this discourse be ended here, because we could not without weariness properly discuss all that is involved in so copious a subject.

DISCOURSE THE SEVENTH

The Narrative is continued of the Literary Documents left by St. Jerome in the Church, made chiefly at the Petition of Pious Persons.

St. Jerome more earnestly laboured for the two great servants of Christ, mother and daughter, Paula and Eustochium, than for others. To them no door was closed: he could deny them nothing. They drew from him all they desired, and they owed him everything. The saint acknowledges this by the laws of gratitude. They were fellow-workers, inseparable in his life and studies: all things he judged little which he could do at their pleading. A few days after his return from the companionship of Didymus of Alexandria, at the petition of both these holy women, he wrote the *Commentary* on the Epistle to the Galatians in three volumes. Later on upon the Epistle to the Ephesians, three other books. Upon the Epistle to Titus, and upon that to Philemon, as many more.

The prefaces which he wrote to each of these books are most delightful, of great erudition, and of equal profit. It seems to me such a pity to pass them over in silence! Let us at least hear him on the occasion of these his *Commentaries* on the Epistle to the Ephesians in the preface, where he writes these words: "If there be anything, O Paula and Eustochium! which could detain in this life a

wise man, and amid the turmoils and the changes of this world enable him to keep calm and peaceful, I think the chief and most efficacious one to be the meditation on the sacred Scriptures." And farther on he says: "You are well aware that I have been drawn, as though by force brought down by your pleadings, to undertake this labour of explaining and commentating, not because from my childhood I had ever ceased reading or inquiring from learned men what I was ignorant of, and that I had not been, as others are, their own masters. For this cause it was principally that not many days past I went to Alexandria to commune with Didymus, and ask of him solutions for the doubts and difficulties I had on the Scriptures, because it is a very different thing for a man to make books of his own, such as on avarice, on faith, virginity, on the state of widowhood, and such like matters, and upon each of these to write with the elegance and diction of profane letters joined to the testimonies of the holy Scriptures, and upon commonplaces expend all the pomp of eloquence, and quite another thing to enter within the sense and mind of the apostle, or of the prophet, and comprehend the aim and end they had in their writings, and by what reasoning they confirm their sentences." Farther on again he says: "And, whereas we declared by the aid of your prayers what we felt in regard to the Epistle to the Galatians, it will be well for us to pass on to the Epistle to the Ephesians, which stands between in sense and in order. I say between, not because it is less than the first ones, and greater than those that follow, but that it is like the heart of the animal, which stands in the centre of the body, in order that you should understand in what great difficulties and deep questions the Epistle is enwrapped. St. Paul wrote to those of Ephesus who worshipped Diana, not the huntress of the quiver and bow and close garments, but the Diana of many hearts, whom

the Greeks call *Polymasthon*, to imply by that figure that she brings forth and nourishes all living beings." It is also proved that he first wrote upon the Epistle to Philemon, and not on the one to the Galatians, because in the preface to this Epistle he says: "A few days ago, after commenting on the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon, leaving aside others, I was proceeding to do the same in regard to the one on the Galatians, and, when most intent on my work, there came letters from the city of Rome that the aged and venerable Albina had gone to enjoy her God, and that the saintly Marcella, bereft of the companionship of her mother, now more than ever desired your society, O Paula and Eustochium! and, meanwhile, seeing that this cannot be effected on account of the great distance of sea and land which intervenes, she would wish at least to heal the recent wound with the balm of the holy Scriptures." In the preface of the second book of this *Commentary* he demonstrates to us who were the Galatians, whence they came, why they were thus called, with the opinion of Lactantius and other matters of antiquity.

To the third book he writes another preface, from which, being very profitable for the disillusion of our own times and for the comprehension of this history, I will insert some paragraphs. Hence he says: "The third volume, O Paula and Eustochium! upon the Epistle to the Galatians already commences to be planned. I am well aware of my insufficiency and the small flow of my weak and poor genius, of which scarcely a murmur is heard and the voice of eloquence is barely felt. Forasmuch as what is now most desired in the Churches is this, that putting aside the plain speech of apostolic words people come to sermons as though it were the theatre of Minerva, or the place where orators were wont to exercise themselves in order to win the applause of the audience, while prayer, interspersed

with fables and lies, comes forth before the public like a dressed up harlot, not so much with the object of teaching the people as to win praise and favour, and to sound like the tones of a sweet instrument, to tickle the ears of the listener: in such sort that it fits in well in these times with that which God spoke through the prophet Ezechiel, saying, 'It is cast to them like the sound of the zither, which sounds sweetly and with concerted harmony, and they hear Thy words and do not put them in practice.' What shall I do? Shall I perchance keep silence? But it is written, 'You shall not appear empty in the presence of your Lord'; and Isaias (according to the Hebrew text) wails and sighs, saying, 'Alas for me! why did I keep silent?' Alas! all the elegance and ornateness of the language, the beauty of the Latin speech, has been disarranged and made rude by the uncouthness of the Hebrew lesson! You are well aware that for more than fifteen years I have not taken up in my hands either Cicero or Virgil, or any of the Gentile authors; and if in my discourses some time or another something of this escapes me, it is because it comes to my memory like the mist of a former dream. How much I have profited from the continual study of that strange tongue, let others judge; but *I* know how much I have lost of my own. To this is added that owing to my infirmities, to not only my failing eyesight but all my wretched body, I am unable to write by my own hand, nor can I compensate for what is wanting in elegance of diction by diligence, as is said of Virgil that his books were like the cubs of the she-bear, which were licked by the mother into shape and perfection. And, as I employ a copyist, if I linger a little to think the better and express myself, he silently reprehends me, drawing back his hand and wrinkling his brow, and by every movement of his person seems to be telling me that he is losing time and is idle."

From these words of St. Jerome, and other similar ones which he employs in the preface to the third book of his *Commentary on Zacharias,* is understood the frequency of his ailments, the debility and slightness of his body, the strain of continual labour, the failing of his sight, the effect of his vigils and penances. Here also is condemned the vain curiosity of speakers of our time, their emptiness of expression, and the bold things they advance without respect to what they are treating upon in the sacred Scriptures. He also wrote at the petition of these two holy women the *Commentaries on Micheas, Nahum, Sophonias,* and *Aggeus,* and in the preface to the book of Sophonias he replies in a very elegant manner to those who reprehend him because he dedicates his labours to women; but all this we have already treated upon.

He also wrote commentaries on the other minor prophets, at the request of many pious men who were desirous of having this boon, and who greatly esteemed the labours of this great doctor, being fully aware of the treasures that were enclosed within. The most notable of these pious men, and the one for whom he wrote most, and one he held in great respect, was Pammachius, *son-in-law* of St. Paula, whom she styled *son*; the first appellation being due to him according to the flesh, and the second according to the spirit. To Pammachius he dedicated the three books of *Commentaries on Osee,* while in the preface to the second book he tells us that up to that date none of the Latins had written upon this prophet, for which reason he (Jerome) was held to be a very daring man to attempt doing so. Farther on he alleges a reason which is very characteristic of himself.

"I am very glad of your assistance," he says, "forasmuch as in the principal of the cities here below I have a defender who stands as one of the first in nobility and in

religion. But, after all, I would rather it should happen to me what Titus Livius wrote of Cato, that as regards his virtue and his excellence none could be a party to increasing them by praise, nor lowering them by vituperation ; because both the one and the other was done by men of great genius." This he said in reference to Cicero and Cæsar, since the one wrote much in his praise, and the other in his dispraise. "Whilst we live and remain enclosed in these easily broken clay vessels, it would appear that the favour of friends is of some use, and the opprobrium of our enemies does us harm," he adds ; " but when dust joins itself to dust, and when both, such as we writers and those who judge us, have been taken away by pale death and been succeeded by another generation, and the first leaves of the now green trees shall have fallen, and these again be succeeded by the new ones of another spring, then, irrespective of dignities or names, the great genius will be judged for what he is ; the reader will have no regard as to who he be, but what he proves to be, whether he be a bishop or layman, emperor or lord, whether soldier or slave, nor whether he was vested in purple or in common cloth ; the merit only of the work done will be regarded, without respect to these differences."

This is St. Jerome's opinion, and as true as our experience clearly manifests to us. The example lies before us. Who that beholds at the present day the writings of St. Jerome, who was but a poor monk enclosed in a cell, weak, in ill-health, an outcast placed now on the height and pinnacle as a grand author, well-nigh worshipped and held up to be a luminary for all the world, a great treasure of learning for the Church and for heaven ! What became of the writings of an infinite number of bishops, prelates, princes, and others who wrote in those times, and in other ages, who, whilst they lived, held power, whom falsehood and ambition had so greatly flattered, placing them above the moon, and

who now are buried in oblivion? Scarcely any one ever knows that they existed! Fate is changed: some of the writings of these serve now, as the poet says, to wrap up pepper and spices in shops, to be torn by schoolboys; while those of the first order, in the same way that they are cast to the winds and become consumed, are in their reputation rising strong on the wing, and their names become green again. In the preface to the third book of the *Commentary upon Amos* he declares the order he followed when writing upon the twelve minor prophets, and to his friend Pammachius he speaks in this wise: "Without order and in a confused manner did we begin to write upon the minor prophets, and assisted by our Lord we have concluded doing so, not however from the first consecutively to the last, according to the order we read them, but as I could, and as I was asked, did I expound them—Nahum, Micheas, Sophonias, and Aggeus. I dedicated them first to Paula, and to her daughter Eustochium, as lovers of work; subsequently I dedicated two books upon *Habacuc* to Chromatius, Bishop of Aquileia. Then after a long silence, in the third instance, to you, who bade me do it, I expounded Abdias and Jonas. This present year, which for its glory is the sixth of the consulship of Arcadius Augustus and of Anicius Probus, I dedicate the Prophet Zacharias to Exuperius, Bishop of the Church of Tolosa; and to two monks of the same city, Minnerius and Alexander, the Prophet Malachias; and from thence I returned to the commencement of the book, when I felt unable to deny you Osee, Joel, and Amos. After a very grave illness of my body, I manifested my boldness in the speed of my dictation, and in writing what others dared not to write, altering many times my pen and my style, I cast it to the wings of fate and to the mercy of the events which follow generally those who compose, dictating and putting

to the test and place of danger both genius and doctrine; because, as I have affirmed at other times, I can no longer bear the effort of writing with my own hand, and in the explanation of the sacred Scriptures pedantic words are not sought for, adorned with the flowers of oratory, but erudition and the simple truth."

In the preface to the *Commentary upon Abdias* Jerome both excuses and accuses himself with a charming elegance for the daring he evinced in attempting a commentary upon that prophet, when a youth, when he neither knew what he was about nor had the spirit which so great an affair required. The *Commentary upon Zacharias* he likewise wrote off with extraordinary speed, as he himself tells us in the preface to those three books. The cause of this speed was due to Sisinius, the monk, who was sent by Exuperius, Bishop of Tolosa, to visit our holy doctor and other saintly men who dwelt in Egypt leading a monastic life. This Sisinius was very anxious to return, hence he urged upon our saint great speed; nevertheless, this haste is not apparent in the *Commentaries*, for so great was his trust in the prayers of his servants to uphold him in all this, that, despite the haste and the speed, the work came forth very finished and perfect. As I have had already occasion to state before, the works of this man were offsprings, conceptions, and births produced by the power of prayer, and which before they come forth are overshadowed by so happy a star that no adverse event can occur to them. If I am not in error, it is my belief that in many of these *Commentaries* the holy man had divine revelations and teachings from heaven. And lest any one should imagine that I am guessing, or that I advance some new ideas, let him listen to what he himself says in the preface to the *Commentary upon Abdias*, which I quoted just now. "When I was a child, I spoke as a child,

I had knowledge as a child, and I thought as a child. When I became a man, I put away all I had of the boy. If the apostle feels that he is advancing and leaving behind him all the past, he stretches forth into the future, and, according to the precept of the Saviour, he put his hand to the plough and did not turn his head to look back, how much more I, who had not attained to the state of manhood nor to the measure of Christ? I deserve pardon for in my youth, awakened to the desire of the holy Scriptures, I interpreted in an allegorical spirit, as I knew not the literal, Abdias the Prophet. My soul was fired with the mystic knowledge, and forasmuch as I had read that all things are possible to believers, not knowing that gifts are different, I, having attained secular learning, thought that thereby I could read the sealed book. Mad that I was! The twenty-four ancients who held in their hands the vials of scented perfumes and the zithers, and the four living things full of eyes rise up from their thrones, and, confessing their insufficiency, sing the glories of the Lamb and the rod of the root of Jesse: to think that I could dare all I believed! But the word of the Lord was not formed in my hand, nor could I say, *From Thy Commandments I derived my knowledge*, nor did I call to mind that evangelical bliss—*Blessed are the clean of heart, because they shall see God.* My lips had not been purified by the burning coal from the altar, nor from my former inherited ignorance: I was not circumcised with the fire of the Divine Spirit, and yet I had the hardihood to say to the Lord, *Here I am, send me!*"

In this discourse St. Jerome, with admirable art, shows his great humility and the grandeur of the state he had come to, and it is one of the places which I have singled out to examine and investigate the character of St. Jerome; since, when stating what was wanting to him, he really confesses what on this point he possesses. Then he was

not purified by fire and the burning coal of the Divine Spirit, now he unconsciously says he is (or else he means nothing) very pure in heart, very learned in the divine precepts. Formerly he was journeying on, and had not arrived to the state of manhood, and he acknowledges himself to be a boy; now he says all this was the process of becoming formed, but now he has attained to the perfect age and the measure of the plenitude of Christ. He feels his heart to be already clean, he sees God, and with lips purified, and he is circumcised by a circumcision not effected by hands. Out of his many other writings we could take many notes; but let us leave these in their proper places, especially those on the greater prophets, which he actually wrote in his old age. But here, however, before proceeding farther, since it appertains to the same epoch and to the ordinary exercises of his life in Bethlehem with his monks, I wish to speak in regard to the *Commentaries on the Psalms of David,* which are found among his works, and investigate whether they be authentic. There have been among the learned men of our times various opinions: I say of our times, because those of earlier epochs did not draw things so finely, for they prided themselves as being philosophers rather than philologists. Some affirm, with many good reasons and conjectures, that these *Commentaries* are neither his, nor would it be well that they should be.[1] They draw the reasons from the style of diction and erudition, which in no one thing approaches Jerome; indeed, these commentaries are unworthy of such a grand name. Who can fail to note, they say, that this exposition is far removed from St. Jerome, since, seemingly forgetful of history and of the literal sense, it is all made up of allegories and metaphors, bringing it all down to the mystical sense

[1] Sixtus Sen. 4.; *lib. Bibl. S. Eras., Bruno, et Melchior Canus, de locis,* lib. 2, cap. 14.

of Christ and of the Church, a thing very far from the taste and style of this great doctor, since for having first done so in his early youth in his *Commentary* on the Prophet Abdias, he himself derides his own work, as we have just seen? To observe how forgetful they are of the Hebrew and Greek languages, and so unmindful of the other translations, of which his writings are so full, is sufficient evidence that these are not his. The phrasing and manner of diction is far removed from his. Moreover, in Psalm 132 he mentions and refers to a brother of his who was a layman, and the author of these *Commentaries*, whosoever he may have been, was certainly a monk, and we are not aware that the saint had any other brother but Paulinian, who at this epoch had been already ordained priest by St. Epiphanius. From all these reasons and other minor conjectures it appears conclusive to them that these *Commentaries* were not Jerome's, but by some other monk of those times, who, by taking some portions from the writings of Origen, and by adding some others out of his own head, in the way of those who draw maps or give descriptions of the world, and who from what is extended and wide compress into a small piece of paper (for so does the owner of these *Commentaries* express it in the preface), so out of the wide range of Origen he gathered together this little map.

Those who are of a contrary opinion, and ascribe it to St. Jerome, also bring forward very good reasons for their opinion.[1] In the first place, St. Augustine affirms he did write on the Psalms, as may be witnessed by his Epistle III.; St. Gregory, Pope, affirms the same in the Fourth Penitential Psalm; and the doctor, St. Jerome himself, in the third chapter on Habacuc says that *sela* means what the Septuagint translates as *diapsalmon*, which he has already

[1] Marian., In Censura ad 7 tom. Sculting, in principio confes. Hieronym. Lindam.

declared extensively in the Psalms; as is verified in the Fourth, where this is treated upon. And the doctor himself treated on this more widely in an Epistle to Marcella;[1] and it is a most grave argument for this side that the author of these *Commentaries*, when expounding in the Second Psalm the verse *Apprehendite disciplinam*, says as follows: "In the Hebrew it says in this wise, *Adorate Filium* [a clear prophecy of Christ] *ne forte irascatur Dominus*, Who is the Father." That this version and exposition are St. Jerome's is very certain, because he himself, in the first book against Rufinus, says in this wise, and, whereas it comes very opportunely, I will not omit to transcribe it: "They also say he reprehends (it is understood of Rufinus) him for declaring that in the Second Psalm, in place of what is commonly read *Apprehendite disciplinam*, I said in my *Commentaries*, *Adorate Filium*, and that subsequently, when translating into Latin from the Hebrew the whole Psalter, as though forgetting my first exposition, I said *Adorate pure*, and that it is manifest to all that these things are among themselves quite opposed. Truly worthy is he of pardon, if he does not know the peculiarities of the Hebrew language, who sometimes makes a slip in the Latin tongue. The Hebrew word *naschu*, literally interpreted, sounds the same as *kiss*. I, in order not to translate it as this word, which would appear rather lascivious, translated it in the sense of *adore*, because those who worship usually kiss the hand and bow down the head; hence Job always denies having ever done this to the elements or to idols, saying: 'If I saw the sun, when it shone, and the moon when it went on its course of light, and my heart was gladdened greatly in what was hidden, and I kissed my hand with my mouth—which is a great wrong, and a denial of the Highest God'; and the Hebrews, in the peculiarities of their language,

[1] *Epist.* 138.

take the same sense of *kissing* as *adoring*, or *reverencing*, therefore I translated the text as they themselves understand it. In like manner is the word *Bar* a word of their own and it signifies diverse things. It means the same as *Son*, as for instance *Bar Jona*, which signifies *Son of a Dove*; and *Bartholomeus*, son of *Ptholmeus*, the same as *Bar-Jew* and *Bar-abbas*. It also signifies the grain of wheat, and the wheat sheaf; and likewise does it signify as though we should say *Chosen-pure*. Therefore, in what did I sin, if I translated the word diversely, which was pregnant and ambiguous? And if in the *Commentaries*, where there is no liberty of speech, I said *Adore the Son*, and in the same volume of the Psalms, in order not to appear to give a forced interpretation, and afford a plea for the Hebrew to calumniate me, I said *Adore purely* and *specially*? Likewise did Aquila and Symmachus translate it. And what harm does it work to the faith of the Church that readers should learn here the many ways that a verse can be explained according to the Hebrew interpretation?"

All this is said by St. Jerome. He wished here to point out and for it to be observed by such as blindly speak evil of what they know not, and do not know the advantage the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue brings with it. What text is there stronger to prove against the Hebrews themselves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the plurality of Persons with and under the name and relationship of Father and the Son? Moreover, there is drawn a very fine doctrine from this varied interpretation, and from many other texts and passages of equal weight, as we have more fully said when we treated upon the study St. Jerome made of this language.

Returning to our purpose, it is seen that St. Jerome calls this exposition of the Psalms his, and twice in the same place. This is confirmed, because in the exposition of the

First Psalm the author affirms that he had seen in the *Bibliotheca Cæsariensis* a copy of the Psalms by Origen (and there is no doubt that St. Jerome examined this library), which was written in his own handwriting, as is shown in the Fourth Psalm. The time at which the author of these *Commentaries* lived coincides very much with that of our saint, which was near the year 400 after our Lord's Redemption, as appears in the 108th Psalm; and St. Jerome himself, in the exposition of the third chapter of Osee, says that from the date of our Lord's Passion to that day there had passed little less than four hundred years. His profession and state of life concur and greatly favour this statement, because he was a monk like our saint. For so does he say in the *Commentary* on Psalms 119 and 132; and St. Jerome's habit of quoting Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotian, and the Septuagint is not forgotten here. He also quotes, as he often does in other places, the fifth and sixth version. And it adds no small evidence, that in Psalm 133 this author should say that some fifteen or twenty years back the heretics were in possession of those buildings and walls; hence it so happened that at this same time, and before our saint entered there, all that property was in the possession of the Arians. All these and other reasons greatly militate in favour of those who hold this opinion, and are convincing enough for me to hold them as his.

As to the opinion to the contrary, it can be satisfied easily, because, if the style and phrasing may seem another's, it is not so different that they could not be his. In the first place he dictated it, or, as I imagine, it was the ordinary lesson he imparted daily to his monks at stated hours, as at times he has told us: hence, they are in the manner of homilies and prayers made in congregation; and from this it came that it ended with the canonical hours, speaking to

listeners and beseeching them, and ending the discourse as though by prayer. Of this same kind I am inclined to believe must have been the thirty homilies on St. Luke. And who does not know that this kind of style is very different from well-considered speech dictated with rhetorical care, and that the texts of Scripture which occur to the mind are interpreted sometimes one way and sometimes in another. Moreover, it will be found that none of the holy doctors were always alike, and that what was expounded and explained in one sense here might on another occasion and to a different purpose be interpreted otherwise; and that, if to-day he was in a certain mood, to-morrow perhaps he might feel in quite another, either for the better or not, or had forgotten the former one. And the Spirit of God, which oftentimes moved their tongues and pens to the profit of souls, opened the field for these varied senses and manner of interpreting. That Eucherius was contemporary with our saintly doctor there is no doubt, and even somewhat younger than St. Jerome might very well have been, and also in his old age he may have read what Eucherius wrote in his youth, as he read other things of St. Augustine, who was not older than Eucherius, and similarly to many others whom he did not include in the catalogue, because ever since the fourteenth year of the Empire of Theodosius and the year 392 after our Redemption, the date of the catalogue, until his death, many years elapsed. As to he who read to and discoursed with the religious, what more appropriate subject could he have chosen than to explain to them the Psalms in a spiritual and mystic sense, so as to afford them matter for holy thoughts and incentives to prayer? And for the same reason there was no need for treating of the many versions and translations, although, as I have said, he did not altogether ignore them, since he selected the Vulgate version

of the Septuagint as being well known to the monks and understood by them, thus assisting the memory and following the ordinary rule of the Church. As regards what is brought forward about a brother who was a layman, it does not add much force, because it might have been during the epoch before Paulinian was ordained, or he might have had a cousin or near relative whom he called brother, but of whom no occasion had arisen for making mention in his writings—a thing which is not of great account, since he never mentions his mother. Therefore it has always appeared to me that the greater probability lay in the verdict that these *Commentaries* should be admitted to be his. Furthermore, there is a good conjecture in the fact that in them no mention is made of heretics but such as had existed up to the time of St. Jerome, viz. Arians, Macedonians, Manicheans, Novatians, Marcionites, Eunomians, and others. Nor does he quote any authors but the usual ones—Origen, Lactantius, Hilary, and Josephus—in order to conclude all these objections with one more reason, and, as it were, finish the matter of evidence, so that, granted that the saint many times says that he wrote on the Psalms, and refers to this exposition when he speaks of them, as appears in Isaias and in the catalogue *De viris illustribus* and other parts, and that the exposition of these *Commentaries* agrees a thousand times with those he quotes in other places; and, furthermore, that the author of this exposition dwelt in Bethlehem, was a monk and expounded to monks, as appears in Psalm 95, and that it was written shortly after the Arians arose and close upon the year 400 of our Redeemer; hence it was either Jerome who wrote them, or at least it was from these expositions that some daring person made them up—adding or subtracting the parts which are judged not to be of Jerome.

I wish, nevertheless, to add a very telling conjecture

about this, that granted, as we have proved above, that our doctor arranged and ordained the offices of the Church, and apportioned the Psalms for the week-days according as they agreed with the Mass, the man who should read this exposition, and find that it agreed beautifully with the other, and that it had all come out of the same workshop, and that these warnings and prayers which the saint puts at the end of the exposition of each Psalm, as an epitome of what he has said on the said Psalm, are very similar to what we call *collects*, and are used by the Church, and that, if not the same, they partake very largely of them: let this suffice to prove the case, for in my judgment, putting many other reasons aside, it seems to me of much weight. And so that this matter should be concluded in this Discourse, let it be known that the *Commentaries* on the Book of Job which are found among the works of our saint are not acknowledged by learned men to be Jerome's, for the same reasons as have been alleged for those of the Psalms. The style, the phraseology, and the language are not at all equal to his; the manner of commenting very different; the chronology and the reasoning do not tally with those of St. Jerome: it is said they are rather like Bede, for many reasons. This is also my belief, and I agree with them, although I should not omit to repeat here the words of Cassiodorus, an author of that time, or about 559, in his book *Of the Divine Lessons*. He says as follows: "The Book of Job merited approbation on account of the diligence of St. Jerome, so cleverly translated into Latin, and so well commentated." And the same criticism does he pass on the exposition of the Proverbs of Solomon, which is also attributed to Bede, because he cites St. Gregory, Pope, in Chapter XXXI., and also St. Jerome in Chapter XXX., and St. Augustine in Chapter VI. *The Commentaries on the Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, which are likewise found in-

cluded among his works, are, by common consent, excluded unquestionably, because they are not worthy of so noble a master. These are undoubtedly the work of some Pelagian, because in the Epistle to the Romans, in the first to the Corinthians, in that to the Philippians, and the one to Timothy, there are many Pelagian propositions. Hence, let this be here declared once and for all. It has been the fate of all the holy doctors, and the ancient fathers (as we have touched upon already), that they all suffered shipwreck in their works; many indeed were lost, and the gap was filled up in this rich merchandise by the substitution of much foolish writing, the outcome of great audacity, which usurped their great names, and thus imposed upon us as though ignorant and blind, that we should be unable to distinguish alchemy from true gold, nor the light of a single candle from that of the mid-day sun! One of those who most suffered on this point was St. Jerome, yet it was in him that the disguise was soonest revealed, his genius and his style being so extraordinary that some one might deem that he could imitate him, but it would happen to such an one, as the poet tells us,

> . . . ut sibi quivis
> Speret idem, sudet multum frustraque laboret:
> Ausus idem, tantum series juncturaque pollet.[1]

Many sought to imitate him, and thought to succeed with the same; they laboured in vain, because his manner of binding together sentences and words is a thing few can do: some little thing they imitated deceived them. So greatly was this assisted by the ignorance of the times, that many of those who were to give sentence followed the current and gave authority to falsehood, and even at this present day some are vexed if a single

[1] Hor., in *Arte Poët.*

page is touched of what is bound between the boards, so long as it is entitled with the august name of *Jerome*, not looking to the effect but to the censor, to the contrary of Jesus Christ. One of the things that prudent commentators call in question at first is the title of the work, and then the name of the author; for even in the Sacred Letters, although there is but one author of them all, which is the Holy Ghost, the commentators demand who was the author: whether it was Moses who wrote the Book of Job; whether Samuel the two first Books of Kings; and if Solomon wrote that of Wisdom: how much more so in the case of those who have not so sovereign an origin. And they have good reason for this, especially in the books *of the doctors and fathers of the Church*, upon the concordance and harmony of which depend so many and such grave things; hence must these be viewed with many eyes, as regards their titles, in order that their works be not admitted as those of saints, which in truth are not worthy of such greatness. Many authors kept back their names in the books they wrote for many reasons: sometimes through humility, like the one who wrote the book on the chief virtues of Christ, addressed to St. Cornelius, Pope, because the author himself says so; and, as it was seen later that when St. Cyprian at times wrote to St. Cornelius the people at once gave out the book to be *St. Cyprian's*. Other authors do not wish to put a name, in order to see with greater freedom what opinion the world forms of their books, like *Apelles* behind the board. St. Gregory Nazianzen, in the preface to his book, *De Fide*, says he persuaded a friend of his to remove the title of the author, and read it out to some persons, in order to see what they thought of it, and amend what good judges should find fault with. Others disguise their name because they feel the work would not be well received if the name of the author were made known, and

for this reason does St. Jerome say that St. Paul omitted his in the Epistle to the Hebrews, who were his brethren, knowing that they were so ill-disposed towards him for having left Judaism, and that, on finding his name attached to it, they would refuse to read what was of such importance to them; hence many thought that Epistle was the work of St. Barnabas, or one of the other apostles. Others, again, omit their name so as not to anger those they touch, and thus remove envy and hatred, since these might judge the books were written against them purposely; and this is declared by St. Jerome in the dialogues against the Pelagians, where he puts in the names of Critobulus and Atticus, so that no individual should feel he was attacking them. Others, again, who feel that their own work is of small importance, oftentimes done at the pleadings of friends, who have little experience, do not wish to put their name, and later on those who succeed them put on any name they fancy. Others, to avoid vainglory, like Salvianus Massiliensis, entitled their books *Parenetícos*, under the *nom de plume* of *Timothy*; and Vincentius of Lerins called his book against the heresies *Peregrinus*, to charm with this name the heretics themselves, who loved singular things. Others would write solely as an exercise, and put no name, because there was nothing solid or meant in earnest: they were called *progymnasmata*, these said writings, which were literary ventures previous to the formal ones. Of this kind many think, and not unduly, are the dialogues of Augustine and Orosius upon Genesis; and among the Gentiles the Epistles of Phalaris of Agrigentum, and the Epistle of Brutus; and even those between Seneca and Paul. Some ignorantly believe that they are the works of those whose names are assumed in these exercises. All these reasons for concealing names are proper and fair, and such as did not understand them ascribed names to them

as best pleased their fancy, according as they thought they detected some similarity to those authors; more especially was this done at the commencement, when they fell into the hands of copyists who were of small learning, had little experience, and less reading of various authors. Other causes, less good, for disguising names of the writers existed, such as hoaxing the readers and deceiving them, by making them read childish things under the name of grave authors. And even worse reasons existed, for they wrote to scatter errors and instil the poison of malice in golden cups. At the beginning of the Church much of this came forth: from this flowed those spurious gospels spoken of above by our saint, ascribed to Bartholomew, Thomas, Philip, and others, the invention of the Manichees, who assumed the names of those apostles in order to effect the deception.

There are many other causes for the falseness of those titles, but it would be too long for us to linger over them now. The manner of knowing them we have well-nigh revealed, when stating the reasons we have alleged, in order to know whether the works that are put forward and which we have examined of St. Jerome be his or not; the first and principal one being the style and phraseology, for there is no better loadstone to discover their genuineness than this. After this, the time, the place, the circumstances of the person, the authors quoted, the doctrine advanced, if it be coherent and alike, the heresies which are reprobated, and a number of other conjectures, so that it is well-nigh impossible for one who issues lies to observe them all.

DISCOURSE THE EIGHTH

Account of what happened to St. Jerome with a Lion in the Bethlehem Monastery. Ordination of his Brother Paulinus. Disputes that arise between St. Jerome and John of Jerusalem.

A LIFE of St. Jerome is found among the works of our learned doctor by an anonymous writer of the class described in the former discourse, although some authority might be assigned to it on account of its antiquity, since for some hundreds of years it has been in such good company. In it is found related in detail that on one day when, as was usual to St. Jerome, he was conversing with his monks on the sacred Scriptures and reading to them his daily lesson, there entered the monastery (which, in truth, could not have many closed doors) a ferocious lion, limping on three feet, holding up the fourth paw as though in pain and unable to set it on the ground. The monks, full of terror at the sight of the wild beast, fled in all directions, where each judged best to be out of danger. Our holy Father, however, approached, without manifesting fear, the formidable lion, which lifted up its foot higher to have it inspected. The saint took up the proffered paw between his hands, and, on carefully examining it, found that a long splinter had pierced it through. He gently drew it out, and applied to the wound what he judged would

relieve the pain. The royal beast manifested its gratefulness for the good deed done by becoming quite tame and meek, and showing pleasure in remaining in the company of the religious. When the monks witnessed this, they lost all fear of the lion, and approached trustfully to him, while the lion on its part rubbed his head against them, quite pleased and happy at being among them. Here the author describes the saint as consulting with his monks how best to employ their new guest, so that he should not be idle, and proceeds to relate that it was decided in chapter to impose the task on the lion of keeping guard over the donkey which was employed there to bring daily from the forests the load of wood needed for the service of the monastery. The lion used to lead the donkey to the fields and woods in the morning, and conduct it back in the evening, and, as the task was not a severe one, the lion easily fulfilled it. One day, while waiting for the donkey to return, the lion overslept himself, and, while he slept, some traders passed that way from Syria to Egypt with their caravan of oil and merchandise, and, meeting the donkey alone, judged it had no owner, and led it away to serve as guide for their loaded camels. Later in the day the lion awoke. It was long after the caravan and men had passed on with the donkey. The lion sought for his companion everywhere, but could not find it, and, after searching fruitlessly for the poor ass, the lion had to return to the monastery, sad and cast down, as though quite ashamed of himself. The monks, who saw him return alone without his companion, suspected that, harassed by hunger (because the ration of food given him was not large), he had eaten up the little donkey, and they treated him roughly, upbraiding him, and refusing even to give the small ration allowed him daily, telling him to go back and finish what he had left of the donkey.

St. Jerome, however, took pity on the lion in his disgrace, and bade the monks give him his food, and not ill-treat him, and, as a penance for his wrong-doing, to take the lion to the forest every day, and make him bring the load of wood which his companion the ass should have brought. This was done, and daily, with great meekness and patience, did the lion bear his humiliation, for it was in truth a great come-down for a lion to be used as a donkey.

According to this author, God assisted him, and gave him the instinct one day to sally forth to the fields, after he had performed his allotted task. Good luck brought back the ass and the camels, for the traders were returning by that way with their caravan. The lion, on perceiving this, bounded with joy, and, coming towards the caravan unperceived, uttering a terrific roar, which resounded far and near, infused such fright and terror into the men that they fled to hide themselves, leaving the loaded camels and the ass in the fields. The lion then joyfully led the donkey and the camels with their loads to the monastery. The monks greatly marvelled at this return, and discovered how the donkey had been stolen, and that the lion was innocent of the charge imputed to him of having destroyed the poor ass. Shortly after this the traders themselves appeared at the monastery. They asked pardon for the theft of the ass, and offered in reparation a part of the oil they were bringing. The saint forgave them, and they departed on their way. The event itself I hold to be true, despite that the author relates it in a somewhat childish style.

Thus it occurs in many of the miracles of the saints that, through being narrated by ignorant men, they have been ridiculed and thought unworthy of belief, more especially among persons of small piety who are poorly instructed

and deny everything, ever seeking occasion to cast contempt upon any occurrence, even attempting to deny the miracles and signs of Christ, which prove and confirm His evangelical doctrine, in the first place, and, secondly, the authority of His ministers and the respect due to them, to whom He promised that they should perform greater marvels than He Himself had done. These are the reasons for the performance of miracles, and which these apostates of the faith would obscure, if they could. There are pious Catholics who declare that this event did not happen to our saint, but to the saintly Abbot Gerasimus, who dwelt near the shores of the Jordan, of whom Sophronius, in his *Pratum spirituale*, recounts a similar case,[1] and it appears that, as no grave author made any mention of it, nor does Jerome himself speak of it in his writings, as well as the similarity of the names *Gerasimus* and *Jerome*, he may have been mistaken for the other; moreover, that in Bethlehem and its surroundings there are no lions, and that about the Jordan they are found; and thus this event did not happen to Jerome, but to Gerasimus, or that, at least, it remains doubtful. This may be pardoned them if it remains no further than a doubt, and they do not altogether deny it, because, in the narratives of the saints, and more especially in saints of such early date, many things may be doubtful, but the reasons they would allege for their doubt are of insufficient force to upset a fact so universally received, and acknowledged throughout the world, as for many ages before our time St. Jerome was always depicted with the lion as a natural emblem, for in truth the faithful would not believe it to be the saint without the lion, nor would know him to be St. Jerome. Indeed this has been so widely received that it has become the device and symbol

[1] Basil. Sanct. in Sanctorali, et alii.

of the saint. St. Jerome has in himself and all his affairs such force and a vigour so native, accompanied by so wide and generous a heart, that with nothing else could all this be so well signified as by a lion. Moreover, he is so terrible and fearless, when proceeding against pagans, heretics, Jews, false Christians, and, indeed, against all the enemies of Christ, that no greater could have been the terror and astonishment of those who stole the gentle donkey when they heard the terrible roar of the natural lion, than the terror inspired in the hearts of all those above mentioned men by the fearless writings and words of the mystic doctor. That neither the saintly doctor nor any other author of name should have recorded this case could hardly be a reason for marvelling. This is not an event St. Jerome would have taken any notice of, nor have ascribed to anything out of the common but a thing which had naturally occurred. We have not other authors to recount this, nor even many other affairs of greater importance, because none of the people of those times undertook to write his life, although many saints and grave men were not slow in lauding up to the skies his works; and this would not be a thing to write about, unless when writing his life in detail. Whether Eusebius of Cremona did so or not, remains yet to be found out. At least I have my private opinion that it is certain that the life wherein this event is narrated in detail was not his, nor could he have been a disciple of so great a doctor who was a man of so ordinary a stamp. The Sophronius who, we said, recounts this event as applying to Gerasimus, Abbot, flourished about the year 780. He was present at the second Nicene Council, being Patriarch of Jerusalem, and he declared in his book, which he entitled *Pratum spirituale*, that he himself heard the story recounted by the disciples of Gerasimus, who actually witnessed it.

Hence it appears that this marvel (if such we are to call it) occurred more than three hundred years after the time of our holy doctor. And why should not a case of this kind have occurred to both saints in different epochs? Have we not seen similarly singular cases occur? We find among the Gentiles that such like cases have occurred with lions. Pliny tells of a slave in Rome called Andronius, one of those brought into slavery from the wars of Dacia, that when, as a fugitive, he lay hidden in the deserts, he extracted a thorn from a most ferocious lion, and for this benefit the animal became so friendly and loyal that, when this same slave on a future occasion was brought to Rome, and condemned to be cast with the lions into the arena, the hapless Andronius, placed there in the amphitheatre, met this same lion, which had been captured along with other wild beasts and set there; he recognised Andronius, and not only did the lion do him no harm, but he actually carried the man quietly away and safely landed him outside the dangerous place. This case is well known to all, and there is no cause for us to linger over it.

By other authors,[1] a similar case is recounted of Mentor, a native of Sicily, who drew a thorn out of another lion, and the beast was likewise grateful to him. Of Elpius, Samius narrates a similar thing. Thus is seen that these cases have been of frequent occurrence, and therefore it does not militate against Jerome that it should in like manner have occurred to Gerasimus. Hence the one rather proves the possibility of the others. The lion, as it has a generous heart, is grateful for benefits received, because it appertains only to low and brutal hearts to be ungrateful, such as are the wolves and the foxes, and men who boast to have these low conditions of cruelty are

[1] Raubisius.

ungrateful, who only seek their own interest. I myself have had experience of them. On the contrary, the lion (a proper symbol of great princes and magnanimous men) has no enmity to man; it can easily be domesticated, and, when tenderly treated, altogether loses its fury. That which has been advanced that in Bethlehem there are no lions, and that they exist on the Jordan and along its banks, appears to proceed rather from a limited knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, for when these writers forget all other cases they should surely remember that David vaunted he had killed a lion whilst tending his father's flocks on the Mountains of Bethlehem,[1] thus clearly proving they were often assailed by them, and by the bears, which frequented those parts. For the manner of speaking of David teaches us so. The strong Banaias killed another lion which had on the occasion of a great snowfall pitched into a pit, either from excess of thirst or unconsciously, in that locality, and the holy Scriptures say[2] that this was a specially fierce lion, giving us to understand that, although there were others, yet none more daring or bolder—in the same way as the boar of Arcadia and the lion of the Idean forest were renowned among the Gentiles. And when the Patriarch Jacob called his son Judas *lion*, it was also an allusion that in the portion given to him of the land promised by God there were many lions, and Bethlehem was included in that portion, as in the same sense he told him of the abundance of milk and wine declared above. That mountainous district, adapted for the pasture of cattle and flocks, is, as a consequence, the resort of wild beasts, which find prey there. From this comes that careful watching of the flocks over which the Evangelist says[3] the shepherds were keeping guard, watching in turns by hours,

[1] 1 Reg. xvii. 34. [2] Paral. xi. 22. [3] Luke ii. 8.

which are called *vigils*, divided according to the four watches.

They were very near Bethlehem in that part, which is called Tamer of the flock, as we have already mentioned. From all this is seen that there is no reason for being carried away by such trifling conjectures, and placing in doubt a fact so universally received as this—that, because the thing happened to Gerasimus, it could not be true also of Jerome. By the same rule they would say that, whereas bees were seen coming and going out of the mouth of St. Ambrose when a child, it could not be true in regard to St. Isidore and others.

I believe, also, that our Lord ordained this with a purpose—to give us to understand by it the worth of His holy doctor, and it was His wish that St. Jerome should be seen accompanied by the lion, similarly as St. John with the lamb. The strength of the one animal and the meekness of the other are two things very proper to Christ. And this portion fell to Jerome to be represented thus. Wisdom tells us that the lion is the strongest of all the animals, and does not fear confronting any other, nor does it ever turn its back upon others—a thing which was proved always as a characteristic of this saint, since, in the number and variety of the encounters he had during his long life, never did they succeed in making him turn aside from following the path of his highest aims. The Hebrew language, which, as has been already said, is the mother of all others, gives the same name to the lion as to the heart, to demonstrate that in the same way as the lion among beasts is the most fearless and strongest, so in like manner in the animal part of man the heart is the seat of power and principle of life. Among the saintly doctors of the Church Jerome appears as the lion whereupon all may rest, and from whom depends the principles and

well-spring of holy doctrine, forasmuch as his whole life was employed in giving us clearly and purely the force and truth of the doctrine of the holy Scriptures, which with such good reason is styled *The Book of Life*. Here also is discerned the reason why God ordered that the high priest was to carry the breastplate on his breast, where the heart has its seat. On it were placed the twelve stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes, because all rest on the heart of the doctors of the Church. The Scriptures in the original language use the word *leb* in that text, which is nearly the same as *lion*, because not only from it is virtue communicated to the people depending on it, but also because the hearts of the doctors constitute the common defence and terror of the enemies; for, where it is necessary, to God himself must they manifest resistance, as was done by Phinees and Moses, who kept back divine wrath. His Divine Majesty takes delight that there should be such saintly men, who in this holy manner dared to do so. The greatness of St. Jerome and his noble courage gives us permission thus to speak.

But let us revert to the thread and discourse of his affairs, because for so fully admitted a subject as the above what has been said in defence suffices. At this epoch the sad news arrived at Bethlehem of the entry of the barbarian Goths, Genseric and Radagasus, into Dalmatia and Pannonia. We have already alluded to the cruel devastation which they effected in those provinces in the words of our saint. Scarcely any living thing was left; even the very birds of the air were destroyed. Our man of God grieved with tender feeling; in his heart he seriously judged this to be a punishment from heaven for their barbarous customs their receiving the cruel lash of these uncouth men. As from many divers parts of the world saintly men had flocked to Bethlehem, together

with devout ones, and those who were desirous of improving themselves in the school of this great doctor, Jerome found himself pressed and constrained on all sides, for he had not the courage to dismiss them, nor had he the means to support them. It occurred to him, then, to send his brother Paulinian to his own country and lands, to dispose of the towns and personal inheritance which might have escaped the fury of the barbarian Goths, in order, with the result of the sale, to enable him to finish the monastery which had been commenced, and, if possible, enlarge the buildings, so as to be able to shelter the devout flock that came seeking him. This is related by the saint himself[1] in the Epistle to Pammachius, towards the end, and in another Epistle[2] to Rufinus he says that his brother Paulinian had not yet returned from the journey, and thinks that very probably he may have met him in Aquileia, where the holy bishop Chromatius, his friend, resided. On the return of his brother with what had resulted from the sale of the aforesaid possessions, the building was finished, yet not so costly as convenient, and adapted to the holy purpose intended. Paulinian was a man of exalted virtue, and, I doubt not, also very learned, and held in high esteem in those parts, beloved most especially by St. Epiphanius, who could not do without him. Hence when he attained the proper age, which was thirty, he at once ordained him priest, since he was already a deacon. Thus he kept him at his side all to himself. Orders were conferred on Paulinian in a monastery which lay in the limits of Eleutheropolis. All this was against the will of the holy youth, and it became necessary, so to say, to order him silence, and, as it were, compel him to obey. The resistance he offered was to conjure them by the name of Jesus Christ

[1] *Epist.* 26. [2] *Epist.* 56.

not to ordain him; and his appeal was so strong that they dared not act to the contrary. So that Paulinian should desist, the holy Epiphanius ordered his deacons and presbyters to cover up his mouth, both when conferring the order of deacon, and when consecrating him to the priesthood. All this is stated in detail by the saintly Bishop of Cyprus in an epistle he wrote to John, Bishop of Jerusalem, wherein he manifests the great virtue, humility, and perfection of Paulinian.

After this time the said Bishop of Jerusalem took occasion to break with Epiphanius and Jerome. Both these had with great good reason, as we shall see, pointed him out as an Origenist and a man of unsound doctrine. In order to revenge himself, and divert the cause of this enmity to another part, he said that Epiphanius had ordained Paulinian within his own diocese against his will. And, forasmuch as it is imperative to solve this point clearly and distinctly, it must first be adverted that this John of Jerusalem was a monk, and was infected with the heresy of the Macedonians. Impelled by the hope of obtaining the bishopric, he left that heresy and entered upon the dignity he craved on the death of Cyril, who, as our saint says in the work *De viris illustribus*, died in the eighth year of the reign of the Emperor Theodosius, and that of our Lord 386. John entered the bishopric, being the second of the name in that chair. He did not succeed the good Cyril either in faith or good customs; rather to the contrary, he reverted to his first belief, although he changed his error. In the time of the Emperor Valens, following and communicating with Arians and Macedonians, he persecuted Christians and Catholics, as the doctor himself says in an epistle,[1] and, after becoming bishop, he persecuted

[1] *Epist.* 62.

as Origenists the saintly men Epiphanius, Jerome, and Theophilus, doing all in his power, without losing an occasion, with what forces he had at command, as well as those of others, to molest them. The subject of complaint he urged was that St. Epiphanius had conferred holy orders within his own diocese, without obtaining his license, and without giving him notice of such intended orders. Moreover, that Paulinian was a youth and not of age to be ordained priest; and that both the one thing and the other were against the canons and ordinances of the Church. He also complained that these men divided the Church and made schism, both he and St. Jerome, and that besides this Epiphanius held him in such bad repute that in his church he had enjoined in the mass to pray to God for John of Jerusalem, to give him a good understanding in the things of faith. All these complaints did he publish against Epiphanius and Jerome. These saintly men replied that in none of these had he reason: firstly, because the monastery wherein the holy orders had been conferred did not belong to his jurisdiction, nor to the Church of Jerusalem, but to the Church of Eleutheropolis, which is founded at the base of Mount Libanus; secondly, that Paulinian was of ripe age for receiving holy orders, for he was thirty years old, which age is held of sufficient maturity even for a bishop, much more for receiving the dignity of the priesthood, since he, John, had not attained that age when he was made bishop. As regards the division in the Church which he complained of, that it was not they who had caused any such, but he himself, for he had declared them under excommunication, and furthermore placed under the same ban any who would hold Paulinian to be a priest. In regard to their praying for him, never had Epiphanius named him or singled him out in the Church treacherously, but only had he remonstrated and renewed his

prayer, pleading to God for all, according as it was proper to end with divine words the concluding clauses of the prayer. But all these reasons and replies were of no avail, despite that they were good and evident, to cure his malice, because it was not on this account, nor was it this which had hurt him; hence, making use of the power which as a bishop was vested in him, and the favour of the princes, he first of all excommunicated all clergy and subjects who maintained that Paulinian was a priest, and then sent letters throughout the world to sow complaints and grievances; he wrote to Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, he wrote to Rome, and he wrote to the Emperors, and he even obtained leave to exile St. Jerome, together with his monks, on whom, by reason of the monastery of Bethlehem standing in the diocese of Jerusalem, the chief part of the excommunication fell, because the monks could not in any way declare or hold Paulinian to be other than a priest. He used to come and converse with them, and say mass there, feeling secure of the wrath of the wicked bishop not touching him, since he was a subject of Epiphanius, and lived under his rule. And, although the censure of excommunication, owing to being so wrong, unjust, and, moreover, pronounced by a man whose faith was so suspicious, did not in truth affect the monks, nor had they anything to fear—rather by that path they attained to that blessing pronounced by Him who said, *Blessed are ye when they shall revile thee for My sake*—nevertheless, St. Jerome and his monks, like holy men, full of fear and obedient to the Church, abstained from entering the holy places and from communicating with the faithful. Hence Jerome was absent from his beloved crib; and he would gaze and contemplate it from the outside, though in truth his spirit and soul were within, and from thence adored it, as in other times David, the holy

king, had done, when flying away from Saul, and yet sighed for the House of the Lord.

And so bitter did the hatred conceived in the breast of the wicked prelate become (for the exercise of our glorious Father) that he prevailed on the Emperor Theodosius to order the exile of Jerome and his monks, but by the Divine Will the order was of no effect, because, on the Emperor more fully investigating the case and obtaining further information, he revoked the order given. Now the Count Archelaus, a pious, learned, and saintly man, interposed as a third, in order to effect peace between Epiphanius and Jerome on the one part and the Bishop of Jerusalem on the other. This Count, as is gathered from the historians of that time, was proconsul of that province, sent by the Emperor. The place of meeting was arranged, but John, the bishop, did not dare to make an appearance, excusing himself with trifling reasons. Thus peace remained in abeyance. The Count wrote to him many times, begging him to come, for they were awaiting him, but without result, and he was never able to force him to make an appearance. Then did his malice become clearly manifest. He wrote to Theophilus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, a very long letter, quite outside the purpose, attempting to cover and disguise what he was accused of. Theophilus, somewhat convinced by the letter, sent out a monk called Isidore, who was a man of authority, to arrange and restore Jerome and his monks to the friendship and obedience of the bishop, and upon this affair he likewise wrote to our saint. Jerome replied with great humility, manifesting how great was his own desire for that peace which he urged, but that it must be a true peace and not founded on malice, nor one that would imperil the things of the faith and the good doctrines of the Catholic Church. Jerome discovered to him in this letter

the secret of this case, and gave Theophilus clearly to understand that the causes of the enmity and dissension were not in respect to Paulinian; that it was not on that point that the question depended, but because he had accused him of being an Origenist, and a man who maintained the errors of Origen. He revealed to him eight manifest pernicious errors which were upheld by the Bishop of Jerusalem.

Theophilus thus having been enlightened and in the end fully convinced, began to give up his friendship and to favour the cause of Epiphanius and Jerome. The falsehood having thus been revealed and made clear, John was held in suspicion, and the monks of Palestine kept aloof from communicating with him, as he was held by all as a heretic, and as one excommunicated, for he had dared to silence and lay hands on two such great men as Epiphanius and Jerome, calling one *senile* and *without judgment*, and the other he had dared to excommunicate. In this affair St. Jerome manifested himself to be a brave and courageous lion, because, on points of faith and in all that touched good doctrine and the integrity of the Church, whatsoever would cross his path he would attack with a brave heart, and resist like a noble lion, and tear to pieces. All threats and dangers that presented themselves to him could not for a single moment inspire fear; he was never cowed by the wrath or by the power of him who was his own prelate, when he perceived that he was not his legitimate superior in the faith. Neither excommunication nor persecution, nor finding himself deprived of his beloved crib and of approaching the holy altar, nor his humiliation and painful exile—none of these did he esteem as anything in comparison to turning his face against, or to deviating from even one of the smallest points of the fidelity due by him to the Church.

All this we have stated in a cursory manner, so to say, in order that it should be understood what the course was of these disputes; for the fidelity of history demands that all should be seen qualified, and with that certitude which is in reason. Let us hear the saint himself, in the letter he wrote to Pammachius in respect to the errors of the said John of Jerusalem, forasmuch as his complaints reached Rome, and the things he stated against Epiphanius and Jerome were scattered, and he had favourers, more especially authorised by Melania, Rufinus, and others, who had many adherents in Rome and who favoured him. On this being witnessed by Pammachius, he very soon urgently enjoined on our holy doctor to write and state the case very carefully, and make the truth of the matter known. I will here transcribe the points of this epistle, which more especially relate to the case, in order that this discourse be better understood. Among other things it states as follows: "I will not consent, nor wish that in a case of suspicion of heresy any one should exercise patience, so that it be overlooked, and this dissimulation be not remarked by such as know not their ignorance by default of their proper conscience." He proceeds[1] to recount after this one by one all the errors, the chief being, first, that our souls are in our bodies as in a prison; that they were created before God formed man in Paradise, and that they were above amid the angels in heaven, and I know not for what demerits God exiled them in these bodies, as in a prison-house. After this, secondly, he says that devils will at some time or other do penance (which thing never occurred to them), and will come to reign with the saints in heaven. The third was most perverse of all: he denies the resurrection of the flesh, and the distinction of sex, and that they would have bodies in the other life, but not of flesh,

[1] *Epist.* 61, ad Pamach.

but a class of aerial or celestial bodies, with no distinction of sex, and other such like absurdities, all drawn from the evil doctrine of Origen. After detailing them all our holy doctor tells him as follows: "Do you wish to know how great is the fervour of good believers?" Listen to what the apostle says: "If I or any angel from heaven should preach a gospel otherwise than I have preached the gospel to you, let him be anathema, or excommunicated." A little farther on he adds: "I tell you in truth, were I to hear such things as these said by my father, mother, or brethren, like to a raving dog I would fly at their mouths and tear them asunder, and I should be the first to place my hands on them." Those who would say (says God in Deuteronomy) to their father and to their mother, *I know you not*, would have fulfilled the will of God.[1] "He who loveth father or mother more than Christ is not worthy of Christ."[2] How Jerome here manifests his vivid faith! What a holy impatience does he show concerning false doctrine and bad Christians, deceitful, and artful, and cunning! Farther on, as a consequence of this, he says, speaking with Pammachius, and with whoever should read the letter: "I will briefly declare what Origen and his followers feel on the Resurrection. You cannot comprehend the power of the medicine, if you do not penetrate the malice of the poison. Seek attentively, and turn again to read, and count up how, naming nine times the resurrection of the body, he never says that of the flesh, and thus hold from henceforth as suspicious what he with so much artfulness has passed over. This is all the reason [he says this, assuming he speaks with Origen and with John of Jerusalem] why in your declaration of faith, in order to deceive the ears of the ignorant, you said nine times *body*, and not once *flesh*, so that they should think that *body* and *flesh* be all

[1] Deut. xxxiii. [2] Matt. xx.

one thing; and hence you will say when you are challenged: *I spoke simply; I thought that it was all one, body and flesh.* One thing is flesh, and another is body: it may well be the body aerial or celestial, although flesh must have blood, veins, bones, and nerves. Body is the sun and the moon, the stars, fire and water. Do you see, then, how we penetrate your apparent subtleties, such as you discuss in secret in your corners? Then understand that in the symbol of our faith and hope (taught from the apostles, not written on paper with ink, but in the tables of our hearts of flesh) after the confession of faith, of trinity of persons, and of the unity of the Church, the whole sacrament of the Christian doctrine is enclosed in the resurrection of the flesh; yet you never mention *flesh*, but nine times *body*. And the apostle, speaking to the Colossians, when teaching that the body of Jesus Christ is not aerial, spiritual, or subtle, but of flesh, spoke significantly, saying: 'And you, having been sometime withdrawn from Christ and enemies of what He desires (by reason of your bad works), reconciled and joined together by His death in the body of His flesh.'" And farther down he repeats the same.

St. Jerome treats of this point very exhaustively, revealing the malice of the adversary, and confirming the doctrine of the faith, like a most grave doctor, in a most profound and learned manner, in the course of which he touches upon divine and hidden mysteries, which it grieves me much that space does not allow me to develop. In order to understand the proposition, what has been adduced suffices, because in this example is comprehended the line he followed in regard to the other errors, confuting, undoing them, and teaching true doctrine, clearness, and dexterity. The bishop, John of Jerusalem, always maintained that the contention was

not on things of faith, but because of the breach Jerome effected in the ordinances and canons of the Church, who formed another head within his bishopric; and he would not therefore consent to this division and schism. He was very anxious to exaggerate this, in order to divert them from the point; but he was contending with one who understood him well. Jerome replies to him, driving him closely without repeal and without evasion, saying: "If the cause of the disagreement does not depend on differences of faith but on the holy orders conferred on Paulinian, as he says, it is a great folly not to reply to those who afford him the occasion. Confess simply the faith, and reply to what you are asked in order that it be made manifest that faith is not the question of dissension, but holy orders; because, while you maintain silence, and do not reply to the question of faith, your adversary will say in truth and in reason: *The cause is not orders, but the faith. Because they divide the Church, you say, and they should not make a head for themselves.* Who divides the Church? We, who in the house of Bethlehem are in communion with, and who converse with the whole Church, or yourself, who thinks it well, or with pride will not reply to the question of faith, you do so badly and thus divide the Church? Do we divide the Church? We, who but a few months back, when close upon the days of Pentecost the sun becoming darkened, the world already thought in trembling that the Judgment had come, I say, delivered to your priests forty persons, men and women, for you to baptize them. For in all certainty there were in our monastery five priests, who by a just title could well have baptized them, but they did not wish to arouse your wrath, so as not to give an occasion to withhold the questions of faith. Perchance is it not you yourself who divide the Church, when you ordered your

priests who are here in Bethlehem that they should not give baptism to any of ours at Easter, and I had to send them to Dionysius, the Bishop of Diospolis, for him to baptize them? You will say that we divide the Church, who out of our cells have no place in the Church? Is it not yourself who divide the Church, when you order your priests that, if any one should say that Paulinian is consecrated priest by Epiphanius, they should not allow such a one to enter the Church? From that day up to the present we gaze solely upon the cave of the Lord; and, whilst the heretics have a free entrance, we stand terrified and sigh. Is it we who divide the Church, forsooth, or he, who denies a dwelling to the living, burial to the dead, and, as to the religious, compasses their banishment?"

In the letter which he wrote to Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who, as I have already said, was treating for peace before he had been fully informed, he says as follows: "The cause of the discord, he pretends to say, is on account of my brother Paulinian, a man who keeps to his cell in his monastery, and the clergy do not call it a *dignity* but a *charge*. And after having flattered us up to the present time with a feigned place, he is now filling the ears of the priests of the West with the cries that he is only a youngster, and no more than a boy, and that in a parish of his in Bethlehem they have ordained him to the priesthood. Whether this be true or not is a thing well known to all the bishops of Palestine. The monastery of the holy Bishop Epiphanius, called *the Ancient*, where my brother was ordained to the priesthood, is in the territory of Eleutheropolis, and not in that of Greece. His age is also known to your holiness, and forasmuch as he has reached thirty years, I think there is nothing to object to in his age, since, conformably to the mystery of Christ incarnate, it is a perfect age and full, and I fancy that, when he himself

was raised to the Episcopate his age did not differ from that of my brother; if then this is also allowed to bishops, why not to priests?" Then farther on he continues: "A short time since he demanded that we should be banished, and he obtained our exile. Would that I could carry it out, for just as from him will be taken account as to his intention by the act, so also of us not only by the intention but by the fact, we should obtain the crown of exile. By the shedding of blood and suffering affronts, but not by inflicting them, was the foundation of the Church of Christ effected, and it increased by persecution."

From these brave, fervent words, and many more similarly ardent ones, which he continues writing, is known the warm and great desire St. Jerome had to suffer for Jesus Christ, for His truth, His faith, and His Church. Small fear did the generous lion feel for threats, or the fears arising from the acts of men at the cost of performing his duty and running his course perfectly; he esteems his life no more than he does himself, like to another St. Paul, doctor of the Gentiles, and thus he adds a little farther on: "A monk, alas! what a sorrow! demands, holds out, and threatens with exile other monks; he himself a monk, who prides himself that he occupies the apostolic chair! Let him understand that this race of men knows not what fear of the knife is, which threatens, nor cares to cross hands, but only to submit the neck. Because who of the monks truly exiled himself from his house and country, who is not banished already from the world? What need is there of a public authority, and of obtaining writs and deeds, and calling at ports throughout the world? Let him therefore tap at the door with his little finger alone, and with right good heart we will leave. Of the Lord's is the extent of the earth, and all its fulness. Christ is not enclosed in any one particular spot." Oh! great Father

and great doctor! What a vivid faith and steadfast spirit! What a true monk! How grave a defender of the faith! What an irrefragable doctor! What a lofty contemner of the world! What vivid yearnings for the things of Heaven! Such as these are the valiant ones of whom Jesus Christ has said *that the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent carry it away;* giants they are without doubt in comparison with ourselves, who at the smallest childish remark of contempt made to annoy us at once turn our backs from the conquest!

This glorious doctor of ours seems indeed to us another Caleb of ancient times, who now in his old age is as strong as at the beginning of the Conquest of the Holy Land, and when he came exploring that land, albeit the difference be as great as is the shadow from the truth. That prince of the tribe of Judah manifested himself of an equal heart, both when old and when young, for the undertaking, and for entering into the promised land which he had before his eyes; and our monk and saint in every period of his age likewise proved himself of well-tempered steel and of equal courage to obtain the promised blessedness, which is beheld solely with the eyes of faith, saying with the apostle: "*We do not behold that which is seen, but what is not seen.*" If we remember rightly, with similar words did he reply when endeavours were made by the heretics in his youth to cast him out of the desert as he does now to this bishop (who little less deserves the name), who desires to banish him out of Bethlehem. Of the Lord's is the earth and all that is contained therein; in every part is Christ, more especially to one who carries Him within himself, to one who never leaves Him, as the great Jerome, who never quitted his God. Now, at this time, among other things, a great evil was done by Bishop John against St. Jerome. Eusebius, his

disciple, had besought him, whereas he did not know Greek, to translate for him into Latin the Epistle of Epiphanius, forasmuch as it was greatly praised by many on account of the elegance of language, and as being the doctrine of so great a saint. St. Jerome did so, but only that Eusebius might enjoy it. The enemies heard of this, and sent a wretched little monk to steal the epistle. This he effected, and proceeded to take it to the said Bishop of Jerusalem, who paid him well for it in cash. From this his rivals took occasion to call him falsifier, because he had not translated word by word, and that for *honourable* he had put *beloved*, and other such like things. Jerome then took the opportunity to write his excellent epistle, *On the Good Manner of Interpreting*, which he sent the following year to his friend Pammachius, this being in the year 395, and the fifteenth of the Emperor Theodosius, as is proved from the great eclipse of the sun, of which St. Jerome makes mention as being noticed by the authors of the *Ecclesiastical History*. He also declares in that epistle that all these falsehoods and snares of John of Jerusalem sprang from the cleverness of Rufinus and of Melania, his teachers, from whom he had purchased at a great price his ignorance; and would that they had not taught him anything, which would have been better for him, for all he learnt from them was to pass from the sect of the Macedonians to the errors of Origen. Here let us pause and consider, and not without tears, who were the chief adversaries of Jerome, and the patrons of the errors of Origen, and of this Bishop John, Rufinus, and Melania, those whom at one time he had so greatly loved, had so praised and held in such high esteem. Let the epistle of the saintly doctor, written to the said Rufinus from the desert of Syria, be read through[1]; and all the reason

[1] *Epist.* 41.

for the enmity was in poor Rufinus quitting the side of the holy doctor, because he then fell into the errors of Origen; and being made captain and the defender of them, he, as a consequence, became the cruel enemy of Jerome, who was the chieftain of the Church. Among the number of the chief defenders of Origen, St. Epiphanius names in the epistle the Bishop of Jerusalem, and says the following words:[1] "May God deliver you, my brother, and the holy people under your charge, and all the brethren who are with you, more especially Rufinus, the priest, from the heresy of Origen and the others, and his perdition and loss." And what further makes the heart ache is the sad fall of Melania, that illustrious widow, the pattern of Roman matrons, the honour of Christianity and living example of Christian philosophy—she whom Jerome judged not unworthy to be compared to St. Thecla. And just when she was setting out with fleetest wind, her decks loaded with most precious merchandise, and in full sail was about to take port, she struck upon the port of Alexandria, and was wrecked in the quicksands of the errors of Origen; learned, well instructed in the school of Didymus and Rufinus; and from Noemi was changed to Mara, from Thecla into Melania, this hapless name signifying the sad ending which such a lofty flight was to have. And who that turns his eyes to gaze on Didymus can withhold his flow of tears? For of the sightless eyes of so enlightened a man did the great Father Anthony feel envious, if he had those of the soul so clear and lucid as Didymus had, whom Jerome did not disdain to call master, and to whom he gave the surname which is only due to the prophets, calling him *Didymus, my seer*; and that subsequently he should come down to be more blind in his soul than in the body, is this not a subject to be felt and wept over? He left

[1] *Epist.* 60 in Operibus D. Hieron.

the high road, he departed from the doctrine of the Church, swayed overmuch by his love of Origen; and the seed which that hapless genius laid was tended and fostered to his loss, and brought forth by his disciples Evagrius, Isidorus, Rufinus, and Palladius, out of which were engendered so many serpents and basilisks that no small pestilence was spread in the Church by these most pernicious doctrines. Of the hapless Didymus nought has remained in the Church (despite he wrote much) but the books *Of the Holy Ghost*, which the great Father Jerome translated, and those upon the canonical Epistles: all else perished miserably. And lest any one should be mistaken, it is well to notice that during that same period there was another Didymus, a monk of great sanctity, of whom Evagrius tells us[1] he trod under foot scorpions and asps as though they were no more than worms and ants. Mention is also made of this Didymus by Socrates[2] in his history, who adds that he reached the age of ninety-five years. From all this will be comprehended with what spirit and animus do Palladius[3] and Evagrius speak of Jerome, when occasion offers, and always as being an adversary they say the worst they can, and to the contrary laud Rufinus and Melania to the very heavens. Let this be stated here for our example, that we may open our eyes so as not to trust genius or sanctity, when in a single point either one or other withdraws from the doctrine of the universal Church and her traditions; since this was the cause of irremediably imperilling persons who were renowned in both qualifications, who had attained such lofty beginnings, and had such miserable ends.

[1] Evagr., *De vita SS.* [2] Socrat., lib. iv. cap. 18. [3] Pallad., in Evagrio.

DISCOURSE THE NINTH

Disputes arise between our holy Doctor, St. Jerome, and Rufinus. Causes of the same.

We have seen what were the dissensions between Jerome and John of Jerusalem, and also whence they sprang; now we shall proceed to declare those which arose between Jerome and Rufinus.

Well might our saint have quoted the proverb, which sprung up rather from the ingratitude of Aristotle than from reason: "*A friend is Plato, but Truth is even greater.*" Rufinus is a friend, but what touches faith concerns a higher consideration, for it has a deeper root. Jerome we have heard declare that he would tear asunder, should he hear anything against the faith from his own father and mother, their very mouths. The devil will not leave in peace the grey hairs of our saintly doctor, and no more does the learned doctor leave the devil in peace, but wages a continual warfare on him and his followers. As we have seen, Jerome had discovered the venom and poison of evil doctrines which John was scattering broadcast in the East, and to the West he sent a warning in regard to this bad process. He had fully comprehended that these snares had had their rise in the cleverness of Rufinus and in that of Melania, and these in their turn had imbibed them from the hapless Didymus. Then began to be

severed that great friendship, and Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, made an attempt to patch it up and heal the breach, because between two individuals of such renown the breach would be acutely felt. The friendship was in some way renewed, but the wound remained unhealed, forasmuch as in both parties the wound had reached the very bone at the first encounters. Rufinus had seared into his very soul the doctrine of Origen, Jerome that of the Roman church; therefore first would heaven be united to hell before the breach should be healed. It is vain to mend the roof, if the foundation of the edifice be at fault.

Peace thus having been attempted merely on the surface, as I have said, and the works of John of Jerusalem condemned in silence, and those of Origen placed under the same sentence, Rufinus, whose malice was carrying him from bad to worse, wished to come to land, turning his face back, like Lot's wife. He judged to go first to Rome, and so as not to go empty of the traffic of Alexandria he loaded his ship with the merchandise and wares he had acquired, carrying the doctrine and perverse dogmas of Origen and Didymus very carefully, in order to establish his business with them at least in Rome. He arrived there, and whereas the mind of man is so variable, eager for novelty, and knowing good and evil ever since that first lesson in order to be esteemed as God, he opened his shop, and there were not wanting those who with the same desire took delight in his wares. In the first book[1] of the *Invectives* against our saint he narrates this same thing of himself. He makes up a dream of Macarius, a friend of his, and says that, when composing a treatise against fate, doubting some points which had occurred to him in respect to Divine providence, God manifested to

[1] Lib. 1, *Invectiv.* in cap. Hieron., Paulus à princ.

him in dreams a ship coming from very far on the sea, and it was revealed to him that on that vessel coming to port he would be delivered of his difficulties. Macarius awoke, and pondering deeply on this vision, the ship arrived which brought Rufinus on board. On entering that port, and at once seeking him and conversing with him, Macarius recounted to him his vision, and gave him an account of his doubts, and in the discussion asked him what were the sentiments of Origen on the subjects he had proposed to him. Macarius had done wrong in telling him of revelations that the ship would free him of his doubts, in seeking aught else, and in troubling about what Origen felt, unless we should say that Macarius did not understand that no other merchandise had come in that ship but the doctrine of Origen. And so it happened; the whole colloquy ended in Macarius beseeching him at all hazards to translate from the Greek into Latin the *Periarchon*, which means *De principiis*, because from that original had been drawn out the chief things which had been replied to his doubts. Urged by the pleadings of his friend, Rufinus actually did so, and promised in a preface he wrote to the translation to follow the manner pursued by St. Jerome when translating,[1] which was to remove all that was not in harmony with the purity of the Faith, in order that none of the errors which existed in the Greek should be read in the Latin version, and so skilfully that in Origen himself no opposition should be detected between the texts. For if any be found of this in his books, more especially in what touches the mystery of the Trinity, different from what in another part he had defined piously and in the Catholic sense, he would have hushed it up as spurious and contradictory, or would

[1] Rufinus here praises Jerome very much: of course, in a false way, as he discovered later on.

set it according to whatever rule he found more often affirmed by Origen himself. In a short time the pernicious doctrine of Rufinus was sown in Rome. It fell into the hands of many, with the result that it caused a great scandal among the learned and the well-intentioned. At that juncture the apostolic chair was governed by Pope Siricius, successor to St. Damasus, and he was at the time in the ninth year of his pontificate. Siricius was a man of good intentions, but not of letters. To him Rufinus feigned to be very catholic, a very devoted son, while beneath this cloak he was disseminating the pestilential doctrine of his *Periarchon*, without the Pope becoming aware of the deceit; although this lasted longer than was in reason, because Pope Siricius held the chair little less than sixteen years, and the disseminating of these errors lasted over four years.

To Pope Siricius succeeded Anastasius, who very quickly comprehended the malice and the wretched doctrines which Rufinus was scattering. Here, in passing, it will be opportune to declare what the holy matron Marcella, the great disciple of Jerome, did at the time. Marcella was held in high repute in Rome by reason of birth, sanctity, great prudence, and the deep knowledge she had acquired in the school of so great a doctor. Marcella was the first who in Rome manifested the true meaning of the widowhood spoken of by St. Paul, that holy state which he declared could properly be called widowhood, and she also later on taught what was the true religion, for up to that time the holy state had been held in contempt. At this epoch there still existed many relics of former paganism. Together with the doctrine and teaching of Jerome this holy matron had imbibed the spirit and zeal of her master. No sooner did this book of Rufinus with the doctrine of Origen begin to be dissemin-

ated and reached the ears of Marcella than, perceiving that it would do the evil recounted in the parable of the cockle which was sown broadcast over the wheat, and, putting aside the timidity of her sex, she courageously opposed openly these doctrines, and (silencing the priests) she so prevailed and convinced Pope Anastasius that he rose up in alarm in defence of religion and of faith, and all who were well-intentioned became awakened at the war-cry of this brave woman, and, rising up, they turned to religion and the faith and sound doctrine. Rufinus and his followers, finding the affair was in truth becoming developed, and that it was no longer safe to continue in Rome, decided to depart, striving, however, to carry with them a certificate and some testimony that they had confessed themselves to be sons of the Church. But Marcella did not rest here; nor did she consider the affair safe. She accused them of being heretics, and brought forward witnesses from among their disciples who acknowledged their errors, and said they had been deceived by these heretics. Then the Pope summoned them, so it is said, by criers, and by letters ordered them to come; but they dared not come, and from fear allowed themselves to be condemned in their absence. These words are nearly the same as those in which St. Jerome states the fact when writing the funeral oration[1] of the saint, which he addressed to the virgin Principia, who was a staunch daughter and faithful companion of Marcella. At this juncture John, the Bishop of Jerusalem, wrote a letter to Pope Anastasius in praise of Rufinus, favouring him and sanctioning what he did, raising him to the highest heavens. Anastasius, like one who quite understood this, replied in a vein far from what John expected or liked.

And whereas this affair is a point of importance in

[1] *Epist.* 16.

these disputes, I will here insert some clauses of this reply. Among others, he says as follows:[1] "Rufinus, of whom you thought well to write to me, has for the judge of his conscience the Divine Majesty, concerning which, if his heart is secure, he will see there how he is approved. Of Origen (whose work she translated into our tongue), whether he was first to speak or to make a statement, or whether it was later on, I have no safe information, nor does it matter greatly; what my care is now and my thought is, is to treat with your lordship for a while. Now this is what I have conceived in my judgment, that what Rufinus has translated of the teaching of Origen and published about to the people of this very city has spread darkness and cast obscurity over simple souls; and the faith of the apostles, confirmed by the long tradition of past ages, he has tried to undo and cast down by crooked means. I would like to know what advantage does this translation bring to the Roman tongue? To approve it, if he assumes to accuse the author and manifests to the people a case so worthy of condemnation, in order that with a just hatred he be abominated who but a few days ago by his own bad fame has been condemned. But if the interpreter of so many evils consents in his errors, and publishes such impious dogmas in order that they may be read by the people, the fruit he will draw from this work will be none other than to destroy with unheard-of propositions, coming forth as from his own heart, the primitive faith, and the only one which the Christians ever had, from the apostles down to the present day. May God guard the Roman Church from such non-Catholic doctrines! Never shall it be witnessed that we should admit on any occasion such a thing as on such just titles we have condemned. Hence I trust in the

[1] In tom. ix. Operum D. Hieron.

providence of Christ, our Lord, to make manifest to the whole world that we cannot by any manner of means receive what would be a blemish to the Church, what would pervert good customs, what could offend the ears of the pious, and be the cause of sowing dissension, annoyances, and wrath. Hence I would wish you to see an epistle which our lowliness sent our brother and co-bishop Venerius, indited with some care, wherein I gave him to understand that it is not without cause that I have the fear which oppresses me, nor that I fear the air. Without doubt, I shall never fail in my endeavours to preserve the faith of the Gospel in the lands which are under my charge, and do in this part my duty; and wheresoever the people may be distributed, admonish them by my letters not to allow themselves to be deceived by any new translation which assumes to destroy innocent souls with the fogs of their imaginations. Neither can I keep silence on what has occurred, which pleases me greatly, that from our princes have emanated statutes in which it is ordained that no one of those who hold themselves to be the servants of Jesus Christ shall read the works of Origen, under pain that whoever shall be known to be addicted to reading such will be condemned by sentence of the princes. Up to this I have stated to you my opinion: that it is a cause of anxiety that the people should feel an ill-feeling against Rufinus, and that from thence you should come to persecute some on suspicion. I would also wish to correct you of this opinion, with the example of the sacred Scriptures, because it is written: *Not as man seeth doth God see, for God looks into the heart, and man looks to the face.* Therefore, dearest brother, cast from you all suspicion, and understand that [Rufinus] very much after his own way of thinking translated from Greek into Latin what Origen had said and approved it. And the man is not very dissimilar

to him who consents to the defects of others; and this is what I wish all to comprehend, that these people are so far removed from our favour, and even beneath our notice, that I do not choose to listen to what he does, nor know where he is. Let him find what he describes, and look to any place where he can be absolved."

I had no intention to transcribe so much of this letter, which is so greatly to the purpose, but, conquered by the power and the voice of these apostolic words, I allowed myself to be carried by the current; yet I am not grieved, because an epistle so holy and so important is not lost by being enjoyed by all the world.

In these words is seen the noble heart of the careful pastor of the Church, his sanctity and his zeal. In this we see the force of the reason which moved St. Jerome to break off so suspicious a friendship. We also understand his motive and deep reason for saying of this holy pontiff in the epistle to Principia,[1] as well as in other places of his works, "that Rome had not been worthy to possess him long, so that she should see herself routed and sacked by the barbarians during the pontificate of so great a pastor, and that he had been so quickly translated by God in order that his prayers and pleadings should not prevent the sentence already given from being carried out." This holy pontiff did not occupy the chair longer than three years, and, according to the common reckoning, he died in the year of our Redeemer 406. Hence, taking this very important epistle, which is found in the last volume of the works of our saint, to be genuine, we shall proceed safely to explain these disputes of Rufinus, and on beholding the foundation of them will be able easily to judge the justice of the cause, albeit that for a great length of time they have had no need of our sentence, since judgment

[1] *Epitaph. Marcel.*, et Epist. 8 and 3 lib. *In Rufin.*

has been given by the Church, and the truth is patent to all the world.

At the juncture when the translation was published, and, as we have seen, it met with an adverse criticism, as was in reason, the heretics fled away, and the errors were condemned; the friends of our doctor, for he had many, as soon as they saw the preface to the bad book, the craft with which Rufinus publishes in it that Jerome was an Origenist, in order the better to involve him in his own crime, and even that he was the master, the common excuse of the friends of Rufinus being to say that "so had Jerome said"—they sent information of all that passed to the holy man, bidding him understand that his honour was in great danger, and his reputation much imperilled in matters of the faith; moreover, that most people considered him to be an Origenist, and therefore that, the case being so grave, it was needful that he (Jerome) should come forward and answer for himself, and so be exonerated from so serious a calumny. Among those who wrote to him were Pammachius and Oceanus, and they did so in this manner:[1] "A certain brother came to us, and showed to us some folios, which contained a translation into Latin of the books of Origen, entitled *Periarchon*; and forasmuch as in these pages there were many things to disturb our weak intelligence, and which appear to us not expressed in a safe or wholesome way, we have a suspicion that the author, to excuse himself, has omitted words which would clearly have revealed his small faith. We beseech of your charity to undertake this labour, not so much for our advantage as for the good purpose of clearing up the doubts which arise in the minds of those dwelling in this city, and that you translate the book of Origen faithfully, in the self-same way he wrote it, and manifest what his

[1] *Epist.* 64.

defender has added, and that you discover whatever in these papers we are sending your eminence you find deviates from the rule of the Catholic faith, or what may be indiscreetly expressed we pray you you refute and undo. Most certainly in the preface to this work, without naming you, he says that he brings to the light a certain work you had promised, and assumes cautiously and hints that you are of the same manner of mind—hence, pray undo this, allay the suspicions of men, and convince those who would fain lay the crime to you, because by dissimulating it would appear that you are consenting." [1]

To this letter St. Jerome replied, since he could not do otherwise, by manifesting the aim he had always had when reading and lauding Origen, pointing out the text where he does so; adding that he had never held him to be a man who taught sound doctrine, although he esteemed him as one who had expounded with much genius some great things of the holy Scriptures. "I have," he says, "praised the *genius*, but not the faith in him; he is a good philosopher, but not an apostle." In order the better to disclose all that is felt on Origen, he subsequently shows most of his errors and heresies one by one. And, whereas Rufinus tries to prove that the errors of the books of Origen were not his, but those of envious men and heretics who had scattered them in these books, Jerome proceeds to prove this statement to be false, because Eusebius and Didymus, both being learned men and followers and great defenders of Origen, never gave such a solution: rather Eusebius writes his apologetic books, in which he shows that it was thus he had felt, and in this manner had he written them; whilst Didymus in such wise excuses his errors that he confesses them to be his also, and seeks to condense them with his genius. "What an extraordinary

[1] *Epist.* 64.

act this is!" he says, nearly at the end of the epistle, "that no other books could have been falsified in all the world but those of Origen, and as though at the bidding of Mithridates the truth could have been eradicated from his books! How could this be?" Although one or other of his books should have been tampered with, yet not all his works, and this throughout the world, these works being composed at diverse times and places! Even Origen himself, in an epistle written to Pope Fabian, does penance for having written such like things, and casts the blame on Ambrose, saying that what he had dictated in secret he had made public. In the rest of the epistle St. Jerome declares conclusively that never did St. Pamphilius, martyr, write the book which Rufinus published in defence of Origen, and concludes by saying: "I have thus replied as early as I could, beloved brothers, to your epistle, doing what is very much against my wish, that is to say, writing against one whose genius I had always admired, wishing rather that my reputation should suffer, but not my faith. In this strait have my friends placed me: If I hold my peace, I am guilty; while, if I reply, I am put down as an enemy. A hard line this is! But of two evils I chose the lesser, because a friendship that is severed may be made up, while blasphemy does not deserve pardon."

On the reply arriving in Rome it was made known to Rufinus, who wrote to the saintly doctor in a somewhat resentful spirit, yet beseeching him not to sever the friendship between them which had been restored. Jerome at once answered by a brief epistle, declaring that he had done no more than clear himself of the crime imputed to him and the stigma attached of being called an Origenist, and that with all care he had in his reply guarded against in any way touching him, or pointing him out; that he

called our Lord to witness that, after friendship had been reinstated, he had retained no ill-will; that he had perceived clearly that what he had said in the preface to his translation of the book *Periarchon* touched him to the quick, but nevertheless he would not decide in what spirit it had been penned. Only one thing does he beseech him: that, if he pleases to follow the doctrine of Origen, or of any other, to do as best pleases him, but not to involve him in it, because, if what he follows be good, he has no need of any outside help, and if it be evil, despite that many might praise it, this would not excuse him. "And it would be very prudent in you and yours," he adds at the end of the letter, "not to afford an occasion to those who are resentful —since you might find others possibly not so easy as I am —to take pleasure in false praises."

As the wretched Rufinus and his adherents perceived that in Rome his cause was viewed so suspiciously, and that with the explanation of the errors of Origen which Jerome had made manifest in the new translation of the *Periarchon* the cause of Rufinus had become so discredited, all his efforts and that of his adherents were concentrated in discrediting Jerome, saying evil things of him in corners, and spreading libels. Then Rufinus wrote an *Apologia* in his own defence, and in doing this he finished revealing his wretched heart.

Ere the pages of this *Apologia* had reached the hands of Jerome, he had already by letters become acquainted with what had passed, and the evil things which Rufinus and his satellites had scattered, and still were scattering, about him. In these letters the friends of our saint greatly importuned him to answer for himself, because Rufinus was not so bereft, nor so fallen, but that the former influence of Pope Siricius, who at that juncture had been dead but a short time, yet had power to sustain his reputation; and,

although Pope Anastasius had known him, the cause was not yet so plain but that many judged Jerome to be an Origenist, and that, if there was anything of him in Rufinus, it was from Jerome he had imbibed it, whom he followed in all things—at least so he professed to say outwardly—as his master and especial friend. To prove this they pointed to epistles and treatises of Jerome's wherein he greatly praised Origen. They showed the translations which he had made of his works, and how he prided himself on being a disciple of Didymus, who had drank in the spirit of Origen. Such haste did they make, and such pressure did they bring to bear on the holy doctor, and such force of zeal was his for the faith, and so keenly did he feel being thus pointed at in this affair, that he decided to break silence, and not imperil all that up to that time he had laboured for, and esteeming naught the pretended friendship which Rufinus had kept up with him, being in truth his capital enemy, he took up the pen, and bringing to bear his former valour, power, and elegance of diction, he openly wrote against Rufinus that most famous book of his *Apologia*. This work he divided into three books. In the first he replies to the calumnies and malicious things which Rufinus was publishing against him; in the second he replies to the invective which Rufinus wrote against him, under the title of *Apologia and Defence*, forwarded to Pope Anastasius; in the third he replies to an epistle of the selfsame Rufinus, in which he pretended to excuse himself with St. Jerome. It is the common opinion of all learned men that here Jerome manifests his great genius, a singular vivacity, great fecundity, and deep erudition; and, when these books were published, there was clearly seen the great advantage he had over Rufinus, an advantage compared only to that of a giant over a dwarf. In argument, and in establishing reason, he revealed all

the keenness which could be desired, while in regard to the replies, and in turning back of arguments to the discomfiture of his enemy, his subtlety and wit is very noteworthy, as well as the ease with which he gives such varied turns to the discourse. He is both sarcastic and ironical with his adversary; he discovers his mind and malice with such wit and elegance of diction that it is difficult to put down the book before reaching the end. And, although the subject of apologies and invectives be so ungrateful a theme to handle for pure and pious ears, yet he so well expresses and seasons his discourse, imparting such zest that the most devout and prudent find something to entertain them in a holy manner amidst so much that is hard and rough. As this cause is one which is of faith, and in defence of so saintly a name as that of Jerome, which Rufinus with such malice had essayed to vilify, it is gratifying to see truth brought forth and revealed, and innocence victorious, falsehood unmasked, malice undone, and lies proved. Whoever carefully reads these *Apologies* will behold Rufinus unmasked, and will wonder at the daring of so common an individual pitting himself against so illustrious an intellect. And one of the things which to me has been a subject of deep thought, is that of how a person of such exalted sanctity, of such deep learning, and of so high and noble a lineage as was Jerome could have suffered the company and friendship of a man with so low a mind and bad heart and so untruthful as was Rufinus? I can only explain this by believing that Jerome, despite that he knew all his defects, yet bore with him so patiently in order to exercise himself in suffering, and thus bear the fault of his brother on his own shoulders. There are many noteworthy things to be discovered in these *Apologies* which I might quote, in order to prove the opinion I have stated. I will only touch upon one or two sentences, which are to the

purpose of this history, and for the better understanding of the cause.

Among other errors of Origen, and which it appears more greatly had attracted and captivated Rufinus, was the one on the origin of souls, which, as we have seen in the disputes with John of Jerusalem—for they were all of the same mind—he had said had been created previous to the bodies, and on account of sin had been imprisoned in them.

In order to free himself of this error, Rufinus, who was well initiated in this error, says in his *Apologia* which he wrote to Anastasius (which was an invective against Jerome), these words:[1] "If in this part I am questioned as to what I feel, I confess that I have read many things in divers authors. In some I have read that in the same way as bodies, by the succession of progenitors, become engendered, so also it occurs with souls. This they confirm by what reasons they can bring forward. This, I believe, among the Latins is maintained by Tertullian or Lactantius, and perchance by some others. There are others who believe that at the point when the body is formed in the womb, God day by day creates the soul, and infuses it into the body. Others again affirm that the souls were created first, when God out of nothing created all things, and that now by His judgment He separates and disposes that they shall be born in the bodies. This is what Origen thinks, and some other of the Greeks. But as for myself (and I call God as a witness), although I have read all up to the present point, I have not resolved anything of this question; but I leave it to God to know, or to whomsoever He should be pleased to reveal it. I confess I know not, and no more than what the Church teaches, that God is the Creator of both souls and bodies."

[1] *Apol. in Rufin.* lib. ii. c. 2.

To this our saint replies, treating this discourse very aptly; and after remarking upon the rudeness of the individual, the confused narration, and the grossness of the manner of speech, he says as follows: "I am well aware that among Christians it is unusual to reprehend the vice and defect of words, but it was my wish in this small portion to show that it is great daring to teach that which you do not know, and to write that which you ignore, in order that we should from this understand a similar prudence in the sense and in the thing. He sends an epistle, which he calls most powerful, and a strong staff, with which the Bishop of Rome may arm himself, and the same question, over which the dogs are barking, he says he does not know, nor has he attained what is asked, yet disputes it. If he does not know upon what the cause hinges, what need has he to send an apology, in which his defence is not written, but only the confession of his ignorance? This is not to extinguish or allay the suspicions of men, but to further stir them up. He quotes three opinions upon the state of the souls, and concludes saying: *I have read all; I do not deny it, yet I confess that I am still ignorant.* He is like Arcesilas or Carneades, who say that it is all uncertain: all is placed in doubt, although in being cautious he exceeds them. These others, unable to endure the envy of all the other philosophers, would fain take away truth, even life itself, and they came to accept the terms likely, probable, and apparent, to temper their ignorance by probability. This one also says he is uncertain, and of these three sentences he knows not which contains the truth. If he had to reply in this wise, what reason urged him to call as a witness so great a Pontiff?" Then farther down he says, "Of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, of the nativity of the Saviour (of whom Isaias says, *His generation, who can*

number it?) he speaks without fear; and the mystery of the ancient years so long unknown does not escape his science, and only does he not know that of which his ignorance has been the chief scandal. He knows how the Virgin conceives the Son, and yet does not know how He Himself was born. He confesses God to be the Creator of souls and of bodies. Whether the souls were created before the bodies, whether born together, or after the bodies were made the soul was infused into them, under any form we acknowledge God as the Author, though the question be not whether God or any other made them, but of all these three opinions he does not know which is the true one. But be warned lest the retort on you be that for this reason you confess your ignorance of the three, lest you be forced to condemn the one, and that you pardon Lactantius and Tertullian for not having strangled Origen. As far as I remember, unless I am mistaken, I do not think I have read in Lactantius that the soul is thus translated (so to say), or that it is enwrapped in the principle whence the body is produced. But you, who write that you have thus read, tell me in what book, so as not to appear that just as you calumniate me whilst asleep, you do so to the other, who is dead. Even in this it is doubtful, and proceed with caution. You say, *I think that among the Latins Tertullian and Lactantius, and perchance even some others.* Not only do you doubt the state of souls, but you suspect the authors, although with some difference, because as to the souls you clearly confess your ignorance, but of the authors you state that you do know, and that you incline rather to suspicion than to presumption. It is only of Origen that you have no doubts, since you state plainly, *Thus does Origen think.* Now I ask you, Does he think well or evilly? No doubt you will say, *I know not.* Why, then, do you hasten so to teach me by

posts and messengers, and then to inform me that you do not know? And lest, perchance, I should not credit your ignorance, and might think you cleverly keep silent that which you know, you swear, taking God as your witness, that up to the present you have not on this point anything established or certain, and you leave to God whatever be the truth, or to whomsoever He should be pleased to reveal it. What do you suppose then that after so many centuries no one has been found worthy enough, to whom God could have revealed this difficulty? Neither to patriarch nor to prophet, nor apostle or martyr, not even to yourself, when you were enduring exile and were in prisons, were these sacraments revealed?[1] In the Gospel our Lord says, *Father, Thy name I have made known to men.* Did He then who revealed and manifested the Father keep silence as to souls? And still you marvel that against you should arise scandals among the brethren, when you declare on oath that you know not what the Church of Christ confesses she does know." In this manner does Jerome proceed with wit and skill; but much is lost in the depth of the original by reason of the fetters of translation.

Although to comprehend the spirit of Rufinus and the adequate reputation of the great doctor what has been said suffices, nevertheless I wish to insert out of the many calumnies and malicious assertions one which he invented against the glorious Father, which, on account of its gravity and impudence, may serve to gauge what the rest were. He raised up against our saint the letter which purported to have been written by Pope St. Anastasius (of which we have transcribed a portion above),

[1] This he says because Rufinus vaunted having suffered exile and prisons for the faith in Alexandria, which was all fiction; because during the time he was there in that city no persecution took place, nor was there a persecutor, for since the death of Julian no prince had there been who persecuted the faithful.

but which was not belonging to Anastasius but his own, and he had forged the name of the Pope, pointing him out as a liar and falsifier. It pleased God that Jerome should suffer so great an affront from one who had formerly professed to be so dear a friend. The saint replies to this calumny, and says: "In regard to the Epistle of the holy Pope Anastasius you were obscure, confused, and agitated, and you found nowhere to stand. At times you say it was composed by me; now you say it should have been sent from him to you; at other times you argue and point out the author of it as unjust, whether written by the Pope or not; you declare you care not anything, because you hold sufficient testimony from his predecessor; and that, when Rome besought you to honour her with your presence, you esteemed it as nought through love of your hamlet. If you suspect the letter to be a forgery of mine, why do you not seek for it in the archives of Rome, where all letters are preserved? And on finding that it had not been sent off by the bishop, you could apprehend the culprit in manifest crime, and without setting traps or snares, strangle me in the strong net and noose. And if in effect it came from the Roman Pontiff, you act foolishly in demanding the original of the man to whom it was not sent, and not of him who sent it, and await that from the East there should come the testimony concerning which you have so close at hand the author and the witness. It will be better for you to proceed to Rome, and ask him face to face, why did he aggrieve you so much during your absence, being innocent? The first in not receiving the profession of your faith approved by all Italy, and for not wishing to use the staff of your letter against the dogs; and secondly, why forward letters against you to the East without your knowledge, and brand you with the stamp of heretic, saying that you have translated the

books of the *Periarchon* of Origen, and published them amid the simple people of the Church of Rome that thereby through you they should lose the pure faith which they had learned from the apostles; and to injure you, make you to have said of the *Commentaries* a thousand evil things, when you with your Preface had strengthened them. It is not a slight matter that the Pontiff of so great a city publishes of you, or that which without cause he admits, said or suborned by another; and he utters with loud voice, and cries along the streets and market-places, *It is not mine that book; and if it be mine, it was Eusebius who stole my rough sheets without having been corrected.* I wrote it in quite another manner, and I say more I did not write it; I gave it to no one, or I gave it to few; and my enemy was so wicked, and so careless were my friends, that together they falsified the originals."[1]

St. Jerome here touches upon another wicked act of Rufinus by this elegant insinuation and irony. He had said that Eusebius of Cremona, a disciple of St. Jerome, who at the juncture was in Rome, had stolen all the originals, and falsified them from the translation he had made of Origen. It is against this falsehood that the saintly doctor says these words, mocking his want of shame, and continues: "This counsel which I have given you is what you should follow, beloved brother, and not turn your back on the Pope and cast at me, despite that I am on the other side of the sea, the arrows of your malice. What profit will it bring to your own wounds that I also should be wounded? Is it perchance a consolation to the wounded friend to see his friend dying by his side? You show the epistle of the dead Pope Siricius; and as to Anastasius, who is still living, you hold in small regard his utterances." Farther on he adds: "Granted

[1] *In Rufin.* lib. iii. c. 3.

that last year I should have forged the epistle; but this one, only recently written, who sent it to the East? In it Pope Anastasius adorns you with so many flowers that when you come to read it you will be more inclined to begin defending yourself than accusing me."

Let what has been said suffice to record the sanguinary battle; for it would be a long affair and of small profit to reveal more of the wretched things concerning Rufinus, together with threats of banishment levelled at him, and other mean things, which he resorts to against St. Jerome. In truth it is no small testimony to his sanctity that, having lived in the company of this man in all simplicity he should turn into his bitterest enemy, and find nothing to take up against him during the course of his life, his studies, conversation, and journeys but absurd puerile things. It is well he should form an evil conception of our saint, having said that he had read the *Eisagoge of Porphyrius*, and so from this he should deem proper to say witty things, but they are very clear specimens of his exceedingly low mind. Similarly does he attack him on the subject of his studies of the Hebrew language, and the translations which were brought to him by young men, and which he showed him, these youths coming to him from all parts, in order that in his company and by his own hand they should learn religion, letters, sanctity, and good customs; yet out of all this which was so good and saintly, and bearing such heavenly profit, he draws forth venom and says a hundred evil things. Here is made manifest what hurt accrues to men of mind and genius to meet with evil companions and ordinary minds corrupted in faith or in good customs. So long as Rufinus remained in the company of Jerome no evil came to him; he studied, he learned and profited within the limits of his capacity without stumbling in matters of faith. He withdrew from him,

and unhappily for his damage he went to Alexandria. He met a genius such as Didymus was. As Rufinus knew but little, and must have been vainglorious, and found in this new vessel such extraordinary things, he had also ambition to gain repute, vainglory being a stumbling-block against which many have been wrecked. Little by little Didymus gave him his poison to drink, filled him with dogmas of Origen and a few of his own not very good. Then he found he could lead him here and there as he pleased, by reason of the want of strength in his character, and finding no resistance offered. Didymus could not act thus with Jerome, nor did he attempt it; or, if he did attempt such a thing, he very soon found he could not succeed, because the power he had to attack was a very different one to that of Rufinus. After the contests Rufinus had with our saint he never, so to say, lifted up his head; his small capacity and the great mischief he had wrought in the minds of the simple became apparent, and people began to withdraw from him, until at last both he and his affairs became put away and buried in the abyss wherein others equally suspicious had fallen.

The benefit that accrued from these disputes and encounters was the fact that through them our saint was thereby forced to afford us some light concerning his own doings, because the greater part which has appeared of them in this history has been drawn from these *Apologiæ*. Thus do a thousand advantages accrue to saints from the persecution of enemies.

DISCOURSE THE TENTH

Death of the saintly Matron, Paula.

THREE events of great moment presented themselves to the holy Father, St. Jerome, at the time when advancing age was bringing him to the last period of man's life—the seventh one, the period of decrepitude. The first of these said events was the period already stated of his dissensions with Rufinus, a sequel sprung from those which had taken place with John of Jerusalem. And, forasmuch as these dissensions were with one who for so long a time had been in closest friendship, they proved a subject of deepest regret to him, and also because these dissensions were on subjects of profound gravity, and which could not be reconciled, as the saint himself expresses it in the concluding words of the *Apologia of Rufinus*, but by an equal comprehension of the questions of faith –a thing which Rufinus could hardly be made to arrive at, since he had for so long a time been imbibing the evil doctrines of Origen.

The second event and bitter trial was the death of St. Paula, of which we shall treat in this discourse. The third event was the dispute which arose with the glorious Father of the Church, St. Augustine. And, although these three events occurred almost at the same time, yet the severance with Rufinus was the first; that of St.

Augustine came second, and was of long duration, owing to the epistles which passed between the two learned doctors arriving slowly, due to the great distance intervening between their respective dwelling-places, as we shall see by these very letters. And in the midst of these contentions occurred the death of this most saintly woman, as appears from an epistle[1] by our saint to St. Augustine, in which he excuses himself for his delay in replying to his letters, owing to his many occupations brought about by the long illness of Paula. I have wished to separate these events, and assign a discourse to each, in order to be able to consider each by itself in the most approved order. Hence I have treated firstly the severance of Rufinus from the faith, and his breach with Jerome. Secondly, in this discourse I shall treat of the glorious death of our holy matron, and leave for a third discourse (because of its enduring the longest) the contention between Augustine and Jerome, and its happy termination.

It pleased our Lord, the better to refine perfectly the gold of the life of the saintly Paula, to send her a long illness which should end with her death, and wherein should be made manifest the patience and heroic endurance of not only a Roman woman, but of a Christian. In her breast there was awakened with a greater power than she had ever experienced during her whole life most vivid yearnings for that sovereign country above, which such as do not desire it are unworthy to possess. A burning fever attacked and reduced her to a skeleton, but converted Paula into a phœnix, which, while consuming her, released her from mortal coils the better to take her flight to heaven. Her whole solace was to converse with Jerome, who in her exile had been a fellow-worker,

[1] *Epist.* 91.

the counsellor and the faithful recipient of her pious desires. It is not indeed a small dignity conferred on Paula to have had such a friend near at hand at the end of her earthly pilgrimage to give the last blessing at the supreme moment. It is recorded that daily they conferred on spiritual things, and often during her illness did they recite the divine office together. Her daughter Eustochium attended on her mother continually. Paula's whole desire was to see the end of her pilgrimage on earth; but to Jerome the loss was very great, as well as to all the holy monks and virgins who prayed by day and by night around her. The wealth she had possessed she had long ago despised for Christ's sake, and had divided it among the poor, in founding monasteries, in sheltering pilgrims, and in succouring orphans; the inheritance due to Eustochium was inherited by the poor, for she, like her mother, had embraced poverty as a precious inheritance. But as it would be beyond me to write worthily of this saintly woman, let us rather listen to the words of Jerome, who was himself the faithful witness of her most happy death. Writing to St. Augustine he tells him: "The principal cause of my delay in replying to you has been the long illness of the saintly venerable Paula, whom we have assisted so assiduously that I had nearly forgotten your letter, or rather his who wrote in your name, bearing in mind that versicle, *Out of season is music in time of tears.*" And in the epitaph of the same saint, written to console her saintly daughter, when recounting her death, he says as follows: "Who can recount without shedding tears the death of Saint Paula? She fell into a grave sickness, or, better said, she found that which she so desired, which was to leave us, to join in truth more intimately our dear Lord. During her long illness all were witnesses to the love and tenderness which her daughter Eustochium always mani-

fested towards her as her mother, never quitting her bedside, attending on and performing all the duties required night and day, never leaving her but to run to the Cave of the Crib, and there, with tears, sighs, prayers, and supplications, beseeching the Lord not to deprive her of such loved company, and in the event of her mother's death not to permit herself to remain on earth, but to take her also, and both together be taken and buried. But oh, miserable, fragile nature of man! Did the faith of Christ not raise us to heaven, and not promise eternity to souls, it would seem as though our bodies were involved in the same fate as the ass and other animals. One equal end comes to the pious and to the impious, to the good as well as to the bad, the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices, to him who does not sacrifice—that is to say, to him who has religion as to him who has it not, the good man like the one who sins, he who swears like the one who fears an oath. Both man and beast return into dust and ashes. Why then do I linger so long, and by the delay increase my anguish? This most prudent among women felt that death was approaching, and when the various parts of her body were already turning cold, her heart alone was on fire with the heat of the soul; nevertheless, like to one who journeys towards her own home, and bids adieu to strangers, she softly and in a whisper would repeat that versicle of the Psalm: '*Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house, and the glory of the place of Thy dwelling*'; and that other one: '*How worthy of being loved, O Lord of armies, are Thy tabernacles! And my soul desireth them. How my spirit longeth for the portals of the Lord!*' And on other occasions: '*I have preferred to be the last at the porch of the house of the Lord rather than to possess the palaces of the unjust.*' And when I would ask her why she kept otherwise so silent, why she did not reply

when asked if she were in pain, she would answer me in the Greek language that she felt no pain or discomfort, because her eyes already viewed all things calmly in peace and tranquillity."

Before proceeding with this discourse I will here insert in the midst of the narrative a digression to explain this epistle of our saint. This reply which he tells us Paula pronounced in the Greek language, affords me an infinite pleasure every time I read it, since it is to me the purest testimony of the sanctity of this holy matron that could be afforded by human language. God leads and brings those who persevere to the end in the observance of His holy law and gospel, and who have journeyed manfully, according to their holy vocation, along the rugged path of this earthly exile with faith and hope, in obedience and penitence, into such a happy state, that with their own eyes they see—even before they quit this life and the soul becomes separated from the body—that the dangerous warfare is over between the old and the new man, between appetite and reason, between the members and the spirit; they behold their enemies vanquished, and the great victory of Jesus Christ against sin and against death, of the first death I say, expecting with a vivid faith the total victory over death in body and in soul. They see themselves sons of God, heirs to the kingdom, the perfect fruits of penance; they see themselves paid first the daily wage on the Sabbath of rest, and that they rest from their toils and labours, like God rested from His works. In a word, they at length see what many prophets and kings desired to see, and did not see in this life, and they behold what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor did it enter into the heart of man to conceive; that which is not possible to express, nor is it given to human language to speak, known only to such as have attained to it and possess it.

All this did that blessed woman declare, when she uttered those brief words—words which it is not given to me to comment upon worthily: *All this do my eyes see already quietly and calmly.* O happy soul who has seen by experience that Sabbath kept for the people of God! O blessed trials! For one day alone, says St. Bernard, that man could attain to enjoy, well would he fearlessly enter into all the fires which might be set burning on earth against him during long years.

Now we shall continue to follow on with what our saint, like one who understood the point, added in the discourse of his narrative by saying: "After having spoken these words she became silent and closed her eyes, as though despising mortal things, until her soul fled, yet she continued in a scarcely audible whisper to repeat the above verses, and with her finger on her lips made the sign of the cross. Her breath was nearly gone; she was wrestling with death, and the soul was ready to take wing. Trembling and fear, which usually come to mortals at the last, were in her case converted into praises of God. There were present at her death the Bishops of Jerusalem and of the other cities, the clergy of lesser rank, a great number of deacons, the whole monastery was crowded with choirs of monks and of virgins—but the saint had heard the voice of her spouse calling her, saying: '*Arise, my love, my beautiful one, my dove, the winter is now past, the rain is over and gone.*' Paula, with joyous countenance, replied, '*The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come.*' Then she added, '*I believe I shall see the good things in the land of the living.*' Saying this she breathed her spirit away. Then there were not heard cries and shrieks of lamentation, as at the death of earthly persons, but there arose a devout murmur of psalms, recited in divers

languages, from that gathering of holy men. Her remains were carried by the hands of the bishops present from her couch to the trestles ; the assembled company followed in procession with lighted candles and torches, all singing in choir, and she was placed in the centre of the Cave of our Saviour in Bethlehem. As to the offices for the dead which followed, a multitude of monks attended from the whole of Palestine. There was no hermit in the solitudes of the desert but left at that juncture his cell, no virgin remained in her enclosed room. It seemed as though they deemed it a kind of sacrilege to neglect to come to pay their last tribute to so saintly a woman. The widows and the orphans crowded around, showing the garments she had given them. The multitudes of the poorest lifted their hands, and wailed in grief that they had lost their mother and their support. And it was extraordinary that her countenance was not altered in death, nor did the saintly matron suffer any change of colour; rather on the contrary her features assumed a dignified and saintly expression, and appeared as though she was asleep and not dead!

"There were heard psalms in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and the Syriac languages not only during the three days when the body remained in the church of the Cave of the Lord until laid to rest underneath, but for many weeks, because as many as came sang the office and placed as their offerings their own tears. Paula's daughter, the venerable virgin Eustochium, could not wrench herself from her dead mother; she continued embracing and clinging to her, kissing her eyes and laying her face on hers, pleading and praying that she herself might be buried along with her. A witness is Jesus Christ that Paula left her daughter no means, but, as already stated, many debts, and what is more difficult to cope with, a

large crowd of religious, both men and women, whom it was impossible to maintain, and yet cruel to turn away. What can be more admirable than her virtue? A lady so noble, so grand, and at one time so wealthy and opulent, to come down to such extreme poverty through having, with such deep faith, given so much in almsdeeds! Let others be praised for giving great sums of money, and casting much gold into the money-boxes of the Church, and bestowing considerable gifts, but no one gave more to the poor than she who kept nothing for herself. Hence now she is in the enjoyment of the riches and the goods which *eye hath not seen, nor is it given to the heart of man to conceive.* We bewail our own loss, and it will seem as though we envy her glory, were we to linger to weep over one who is reigning. Live, O Eustochium, in security! A great inheritance has remained to you: your portion is the Lord, and in order that you should have greater joy already does your mother bear the crown which is due to a lengthened martyrdom. Let it not be thought that he alone who sheds his blood is enrolled in the confession of martyrs, because the pure and clean life of a saintly soul is naught else but a daily martyrdom. The life of a martyr weaves a crown of roses and violets, and the life of the other is formed of white lilies; therefore for this reason does the spouse in the Canticles cry out, '*My beloved and my brother is white and ruddy*'; because He bestows an equal prize on those who conquer in peace or in warfare. Hence your mother, O Eustochium, heard that which Abraham heard, '*Quit thy land and leave thy people, and see the land which I will show thee*'; and the voice of the Lord, who through Jeremias ordains,[1] '*Remove out of the midst of Babylon and save thy souls.*' Paula indeed quitted her country, and never again to the day of her death did

[1] Hierem. l. 8.

she return to the hamlet, nor did the desire for the leeks of Egypt ever assail her, nor for forbidden meats. Accompanied by choirs of virgins she made herself a citizen of the Saviour's, rising from the small Bethlehem to the celestial kingdom, saying to the veritable Noemi, '*Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*'[1] This book did I compose by writing during the watches of two nights, feeling the same grief as you feel; because as often as I essayed to take up the pen to write the promised work, so often did my fingers become twisted, and my hand fell powerless, my senses would leave me, hence do you perceive the diction and the style so agitated, which manifests the pain and the yearnings of the writer. Go with God, O Paula, and assist with your prayers him who now in the last period of his old age honours you as well as he can. Your faith and your works keep you in close union with Christ, and therefore you will be able easily to obtain whatever you may ask for. This monument I have chiselled with the greatest perfection I was able, which will last longer than those of metal and bronze, one against which neither time nor age will be able to have any effect.[2]

"I have also planted, cut out, and engraved an epitaph on your sepulchre, which I set at the end of what I have written, so that wherever these words of mine reach the reader may become acquainted with your praises, and understand that you are buried in Bethlehem.

"The epitaph on the sepulchre runs as follows:—

"In this Sepulchre reposes a Matron
Of the learned Scipio a direct branch:
A descendant of the Gracchi and the Emilii,
Also of the illustrious blood of the Agamemnon;
Paula is she named, Saint and worthy Mother

[1] Ruth i. 16.

[2] Horat.

Of Eustochium, a pure Virgin. In former times
The principal and first Lady in Rome, the *Great.*
Later on she followed Christ in His poverty,
And in Bethlehem, the *Little,*
She made her dwelling-place."

On the door of the Cave of the Saviour he placed another inscription, which says as follows :—

"Dost thou behold the humble grave on this
Cliff? Within lies the body of Paula,
But her soul dwells amid celestial wealth.
She left parents and country, brothers, children,
And in the Cave of Bethlehem reposes,
Wherein Christ's humble manger stood,
And Wise men gave gifts to God and Man."

"The holy and blessed Paula died seven days before the kalends of February, being on a Tuesday at sunset. She was laid in her grave on the fifth day before the kalends of the same month. The consuls were Honorius Augustus, for the sixth time, and Aristenius. After the death of her husband, Toxotius, she resided in Rome for five years as an apostolic widow, and as a religious and saintly; and in Bethlehem she dwelt for twenty years, the whole number of the years of her life being fifty-six, eight months, and twenty-one days."

All the above up to this time has been of our great doctor. In these words he has clearly manifested his great appreciation of her virtues, his own deep sorrow, the pain of heart he himself endured, and the tender affection and reverence he had for one who had been his fellow-worker in his own life. Undoubtedly the death of Paula was a crushing blow to him. As our holy Father does not tell us in what year of our Lord her death took place, nor who was the Supreme Pontiff at the time, contenting himself with the mention of the emperor and consuls, there are

various opinions as to the exact date of her death.[1] Some say it took place at the end of the pontificate of Anastasius, before the entry of the Goths into Rome, which, according to them, occurred in the year 407 of our Redemption. They further add that Pope Anastasius did not fill the chair more than three years and twenty-one days, according to the common reckoning. He was succeeded by Innocent, and it was in the eighth year of his pontificate that Alaric entered Rome. This account does not appear very trustworthy nor correct; rather it is contradictory. Clearly do authors agree in setting the death of Anastasius in the year 400, in the month of April, and it appears that those are greatly mistaken who hold that he was living in the year 407 of our Redemption, and the contradiction is manifest, since to say that in the eighth year of the pontificate of Innocent Rome was entered, and that this took place in 412, and that Pope Anastasius was living in 407, is great negligence, because between seven and twelve there are not eight but five years. The most reliable account I believe to be that of Honuphrius,[2] in his *Fasti*, which places the election of Innocent in the month of May 401, and this by common consent, and the sixth consulship of Honorius with Aristenius in that of 404, which was the year in which the glorious Saint Paula died; that is to say, six years before the entry into Rome, as we shall see farther on in its proper place. Others reckon differently, although with slight difference.[3] To investigate questions of years with certainty is a matter of extreme difficulty, and when the difference is not of great moment it is a thankless labour, because frequently it is merely a work of conjecture, and all possible diligence is of

[1] Marian. Victor, in *Vita D. Hieron.*
[2] Honuphr. *Fasti.*
[3] Genebrand, in *Cronolog.*

no avail. To seek the origin of so many differences in chronicles belongs to another study.

On the death of our holy mother Paula, the virgin Eustochium, her daughter, remained with the charge of governing those monasteries: poor as she was, pledged and in debt, as our doctor himself affirms on oath, that is to say, poor as regards worldly goods, because in those of the soul she was very rich; endowed with a large charity, unbounded hope, and faith sufficient to support a greater army with even lesser resources. Poverty of spirit is a great treasure; he who has least of earth and is most bereft is the one who can do most, and he that hath nothing possesses all things. *Nihil habentes et omnia possidentes*, which in our language cannot be expressed shorter or so strongly. This affair rests upon a powerful pillar—upon that celestial promise, firmer, more steadfast than the heavens, since it rests on the foundation of the promise of Christ, who came to make known to us the faith and confidence which we should have in Him. He was not satisfied with telling us that him who should leave for His love all earthly things, He would repay a hundredfold, because even here below, in this our present life, and in each detail of our life, it is proved as a truth; but He even gave us His royal word that to him who should first seek the kingdom of Heaven, and should prefer that labour to all others, all things should be added over and above, as things which do not affect the principal, because if He gives the kingdom who also gave the Son, what will He not give us after that? And thus does St. Peter declare, and thus did he prove it, when he saw his bark and his nets in the exchange of Jesus Christ, exchanged for what had never entered into his mind to desire when he asked what would become of him and his companions, since they had left all things to follow

Him? Here I would fain allow myself to be carried away by the consideration and force of this great virtue—a virtue which was so resplendent in Paula and Eustochium—were I not restrained by remembering that I am not following the office of Preacher, but of Historian, otherwise I would along with the children of Israel make a dash to the desert, and with the same Jesus Christ who replied to the devil those words of fearless trust with which Moses replied to the people [1]—*Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God*—trusting to it, and executing what He should ordain in the lively faith of which he lives, and is better supported, and rests far more securely than with all the means and riches of the world. And by the same rule did the holy Virgin Eustochium live and follow, for she inherited from her mother the poverty of Jesus Christ, and remained richer than had she possessed all the treasures ascribed to Midas and to Crœsus. It becomes impossible, in writing the lives of the saints, since they are living sermons, to pass over without touching on these things. I firmly believe that to these two holy women there must have occurred admirable things in this respect. Because in order to support so many religious and monks, maintain so many monasteries of virgins consecrated to God, to keep up so much hospitality, shelter for so many pilgrims, notwithstanding that there was no property, since it had all been distributed with such a free hand to the poor, I do not know how to explain how it was done without a continual miracle; I know not what to say on this great subject, but to bow the head and leave its solution to God, for He knows how it is done, and as for myself, have recourse to the trust so familiar to our saint: "*All things are possible to him who believes.*" Neither can I linger to

[1] Deut. viii. 3; Matt. iv. 4.

declare this. May God give me occasion in another history to expound this point. Indeed I think at least they must have been of those who, like Peter, left all things to follow Christ. I do not say like him in dignity, for this is an affair apart, but in faith; and, if not, at least as high as to Paula and Eustochium, who, dismissing from their hearts all earthly confidence, placed it solely in Jesus Christ, fulfilling His will and His precepts, and in this way they reached so high a state that what they asked for in prayer they easily obtained, because they asked in the name of One to whom nothing could be denied. How and why it happens that some ask in this Name and not others, although in appearance all seem to ask in the same Name, we shall declare in the future promised history. I have not ventured to write the lives purposely of these two glorious saints, because it seemed to me that what the holy doctor has told us of both mother and daughter is of greater depth and advantage than all else we could ourselves bring forward.

DISCOURSE THE ELEVENTH

Serious but pious Controversies arise between St. Jerome and St. Augustine. The end of these Contentions.

In the encounter which forms the subject matter of this discourse we will find that the victory was not so easy of attainment as our saint had experienced in all the encounters he had had up to the present. In this case his wrestling will not be against a slumbering Vigilantius, nor with Helvidius, the ignorant, nor with Rufinus, the hypocrite, or with any person of their stamp; but the contest will be with a clear luminary among the doctors of the Church, indeed with no less a personage than with St. Augustine.

It will afford a great pleasure to my readers, to the pious and the learned, to behold in the field two such illustrious champions, both, as it were, taught by the one and the same master, and moved by the same spirit; each, nevertheless, defending and combating his own ends, and thus both essaying their skill.

The contest will not be brought to a conclusion with aught else than by each champion remaining vanquished by the other in charity and love, in the bonds and chains of a perpetual union in Christ. Such are the contentions and the differences of the saints; such the fruits God draws from them. Let us, therefore, state the case and the occasion which gave rise to these disputes.

St. Augustine had a great friend called Alypius. They had been brought up together, and together had been baptised. Alypius had a great desire to visit the places of the Holy Land when Augustine was already a great Father, and Bishop of Hippo. As the fame of Jerome was spreading and daily increasing throughout the world, Augustine charged his friend Alypius, when he departed for the Holy Land, to see and visit Jerome, in order to establish communications with such a person, of whom so many things were said, both as regards sanctity and letters. Alypius did so. On arriving at Bethlehem he visited Jerome, and on his part afforded him information in respect to the great sanctity and doctrine of Augustine, and in this way a correspondence was established between these two enlightened men. Alypius proceeded to Jerusalem. This occurred in the year 393 of our Redemption.[1] It appears, as was very possible, that he communicated with John, the Bishop of Jerusalem, at the time when the warm disputes between St. Epiphanius and St. Jerome were raging on one part, and John of Jerusalem, Rufinus, and Melania on the other, as well as all others who were infested with the errors of Origen, against whom the two saints were waging war. All these found the arrival of Alypius a favourable occasion for raising strife between Augustine and Jerome, since it appeared to them that, if these two great men would have an altercation, either Augustine would triumph, or at least they would have him on their side, and thus repress the boldness of Jerome, placing him in an unfavourable light, and so he would leave them at peace: all these motives did the Origenists bring together, and hence they plied Alypius with all the evil things they could bring concerning Jerome, and others which they daily said about him. They accused him of

[1] Baronius, tom iv., annal. anno. 393 et 394.

being a haughty man, full of arrogance, puffed out, who forgave no one, who blamed every one, who judged no one to be anything in comparison with himself, who judged himself learned above all others on earth and in the Church; hence that it would be very much to the service of God to repress his pride and arrogance, that the faithful would be the gainers if his overbearing character should be made known. And if by other erudite writings, and learned ones, he could be made to comprehend that he was not so wise as he deemed himself to be, and be corrected in such things as he was not quite accurate, by some wise, learned man, and of lofty genius (such, for instance, as the world held Augustine to be), his arrogance by this means would be put down and bridled, because then they could easily overcome him. Alypius did not perceive the deception they had practised on him—since it is easy to deceive the good—but lent an ear to what was said by persons apparently of such renown, name, fame of sanctity, and letters—one of these a bishop of Jerusalem, another, Melania, held in the world as a miracle of grace and learning; Rufinus, Evagrius, Palladius, and others, whom he undoubtedly believed were moved by holy zeal. And who would not have credited them? Alypius thus returned to Africa with his heart full of what he had heard, and reported to St. Augustine all that he had learnt. The great doctor took in all that was said in the same manner, because Alypius was esteemed by him very highly, and he held his opinion as of weight, and therefore that his information was truth itself. Alypius had brought away with him the book St. Jerome had written—*De Viris illustribus*. St. Augustine read through this work, and was greatly pleased with the genius of Jerome. Without doubt he was shown other writings, and the studies and labours of the great doctor in translating the sacred books from the Hebrew

into Latin described to him by Alypius. Moved by all he had heard and seen, the great Father St. Augustine was minded to send a letter to Jerome by the hand of Profuturus,[1] in which he commences by saying as follows: "Never did a person know another so well by countenance as I have you before me represented by your saintly occupations, your holy and deep studies and exercises in the Lord. Although I greatly desire to know you personally, nevertheless I have the presentment of yourself before me, which is little less than a bodily presence; because after you were seen by him who is now bishop, and at the time was even then well worthy of being one—I mean the beloved Alypius—on his return to me now with the report he brought me, I cannot deny that your form has remained impressed on my mind in a great measure; and even before he returned, when he was beholding you, I also was seeing you with his own eyes, for he and I are only bodily two beings, as in soul we are but one. This must be understood in the will and common friendship and intercourse, because in merits he was greatly my superior."

In the rest of the epistle, which would be too long to reproduce here, after he manifests the desire he has of communicating with him, and treating on learned subjects, he beseeches him on his part, and for the common desire of all Africans, to occupy himself in translating what the Greek doctors have written on the sacred Scriptures, so that all should enjoy the same, and not employ his time in translating from the Hebrew into Latin the sacred writings, unless he follows the same plan he employed when translating Job, which was putting marks and stars in order to make known where the differences occur between his translation and that of the Septuagint, which is of such authority.

[1] Aug. *Epist.* in Hieron. *Epist.* 8. 6.

Subsequently he gives the reason for this counsel. "It is a marvel to me," he says, "that there should have remained anything in the Hebrew copy which had escaped the diligence of so many interpreters, independently of the Septuagint, which indisputably exceed all others. Because either what was hidden to them is obscure, or it is clear. If obscure, so also in like manner can it be passed over inadvertently and even deceive. If it be clear, it is equally superfluous for you to declare what to them could not be hidden."

In the tenth epistle[1] (in order to conclude with this question once for all) he discusses this point in a more detailed manner. He asks for information why he did not act in the same way in regard to all he translated from the Hebrew into Latin, as he had done when engaged on Job, where he marked with a star what was in the Hebrew and not in the Greek; and with an O what was in the Greek and not in the Hebrew, because this occasions a doubt in many minds. And like to one who deems this labour an idle one, or of small profit, he again beseeches him to occupy himself in declaring the sacred writings according to the translation of the Septuagint, because it would be a serious matter that his translation should frequently be read in the Latin churches, and be clearly seen that it was not in harmony with that of the Greek. And also that it would be a serious matter for him now to attempt by his new translation to derogate from the authority of so many Greek and Latin translations. He accentuates the difficulty by declaring that few are those who know the Hebrew language, and thus there are no means to have recourse to in order to judge whether the rendering be right or wrong. If the Jews be questioned, they may reply very much the reverse of the truth, and just what may please themselves; hence he says: "*You will remain alone*

[1] *Epist.* 10 in Operibus D. August.

to convince them, and there will be wanting a judge to decide and give sentence as to which is right."

Farther on he adds something respecting a report or rumour that had arisen in one of the churches of Africa, because a bishop who took pleasure in the translations of Jerome had read out a part of the prophet Jonah, and it sounded different to what the people had been accustomed to and which was accepted by all; and St. Augustine concludes in this third letter against our saint, that probably he may be deceived in this translation, and that it would be better to put it aside and occupy himself in better work. This was the first encounter, together with what he wrote in the first and third letter, leaving aside other things which I will later on treat of, in order not to have to repeat this episode until we come to the reply.

Previous to receiving this first epistle, St. Jerome wrote to St. Augustine, either through Alypius or some one else, forasmuch as he had a suspicion of what might have happened—that, on account of Alypius having been with John of Jerusalem, Rufinus, and the rest of that band, he might have imbibed some of the evil doctrine of Origen; and this is evidently perceived in the reply of St. Augustine to this letter, which is brief, and runs in this manner at the commencement:[1] "I thank you very much that, as a short salutation, you in truth sent me a veritable epistle, although all too short for what I should have wished to receive from your hand, because from such an individual no letter is long, despite that time be very much taken up. Yet, despite I should find myself surrounded and engrossed by great affairs, the business of others and of seculars, I would not condone the brevity of your epistles did I not think it was an answer to my brief recommendation sent to you by word of mouth." From this is seen that St. Jerome

[1] *Epist.* 9, in Operibus D. August., and in D. Hieron. *Epist.* 87.

had not yet received the first epistle of St. Augustine, in which he, in my opinion, reveals that he had turned somewhat against our saint by reason of the reports afforded him by Alypius, since he, without any reason, remarks on his studies of the Hebrew language, considering them as idle and unsafe, and desires him to employ his time in the translation of Origen. For this does he give him to understand by classing him among the Greek authors when he says, "He whom you greatly praise in your writings." From which is perceived with singular light the malice of Rufinus, John, and the others, because among other things they told Alypius that he was very fond of the doctrine of Origen, in order to make him out to St. Augustine to be a changeable, inconstant man, because what he one day had praised, the next he would condemn and abuse.

In this second epistle written by St. Augustine the chief point is the one in the first letter—the interpretation of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians of the point as to whether he reprehends St. Peter disguisedly and by agreement between the two, as St. Jerome expounds; and this same point is repeated in the second letter. As these things must be discussed leisurely, I do no more than point out the order of things.

Besides this matter, he wrote in this second epistle to ask him what was the title he gave the book he had written on the men who themselves had been writers in the Church, because he had been told (I know not by whom) that he had entitled it *Epitaph*, a thing which St. Jerome proved was only done as it were in scorn, for never had he set such a title to his work.

There is no doubt that Augustine rather ill-used Jerome in this epistle, as though he had in this commentary on St. Paul committed some great error, while in a third

letter he repeats the same remarks. None of these letters, however, reached the hands of Jerome until many years after, indeed not for ten years, as can be proved; but this was not due to any fault of Augustine, but to the malice of his adversaries. These letters were sent about Italy, and were read by many for several years, copies and transcriptions being taken, and could be found in every city, with notable affront to Jerome; for the wicked malice of these people strove that none of these letters should reach him, in order that, so long as his reply to them should not appear, they could triumph over him by declaring that, through shame and mortification, he dared not send a reply. St. Augustine was not aware of this, or that his letters had never been delivered; rather he was hurt that during all this length of time no replies had been vouchsafed them. And it so happened that after this long lapse of time and years these letters fell into the hands of Sisimus, a deacon attached to our holy doctor. This Sisimus came to Jerusalem, and showed the letters to Jerome, who, although he well perceived that the style and diction was Augustine's,[1] yet he did not essay a reply for a very long time after. At length, moved by the affront, he wrote two letters[2] to Augustine complaining of the grievance, yet informing him that he would not send a reply until he should be certified that those said letters were his, by receiving one direct from him saying so. The first of these two letters he sent by Austerius, and the second by Firmio, and although couched in terms of injured feelings, yet protesting nevertheless that he did not wish to sever the bonds of love and charity; thus at the end of the first epistle he writes:[3] "Behold the depths of love that I bear you, for even though I am provoked, I would not reply, because I do not believe that to be

[1] *Epist.* D. Hieron. 92. [2] *Epist.* Hieron. 91. [3] *Epist.* Hieron. 91.

yours what perchance I should reprehend in another." At the end of the second one he says:[1] "May God guard you, beloved friend, in age son, but in dignity father." (At this juncture St. Augustine was already a bishop.) And he adds: "I beseech you to be careful that whatever you may write may come first to my hands." St. Augustine rejoined, replying through Cyprian, deacon, and between this reply and the first of the letters he had written there had elapsed, although it appears incredible, twelve years, because the first was in the year 393 and these are of the date 406.[2] And the truth is manifest, because St. Jerome says in one of the replies that he had not seen a letter of St. Augustine until Sisimus came from France to Jerusalem, sent by the holy Bishop Exuperius of Tolouse, which was during the sixth consulate of Arcadius, with his companion Probus, which was in the year 406. And our saint himself, in his *Commentaries upon Amos*, says that it was in the time of these aforesaid consuls that he made the *Commentaries upon Zacharias*. He says that Sisimus was sent by Exuperius, and that he was the same who received the letters and transcripts of those of St. Augustine seems true, because in one of these letters, which St. Jerome forwards to St. Augustine, he mentions St. John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, saying that John, formerly Bishop of Constantinople, for he was so no longer, had written a book upon that epistle and text of St. Paul. St. Chrysostom was deposed and banished in the year 404, hence it might have been the same Sisimus who was sent by Exuperius, and the one from whom he received the letters—I mean the copies of the letters of St. Augustine—and therefore there elapsed over twelve years from the first letters until those he received by Cyprian, in which was confirmed all that was contained in the first ones.

[1] *Epist.* Hieron. 94.

[2] *Epist.* Hieron. 92.

At this juncture Jerome could no longer avoid taking up his pen, and in the open field was started the contention and the defence on his part. Having regard to the course which followed, it will be well, in order to satisfy all parties, that we should make manifest the chief points for which St. Augustine attacks Jerome, and his reply and defence.

We have already seen the low estimate St. Augustine formed of the study of the Hebrew language, and that he judged it lost time, and a thing without reason, the translation Jerome was making of the holy books. Let us hear what Jerome replies. "To the first question of the translations, and why I in mine place stars and commas, and in others I do not, speaking with all the honour and respect I owe you, it seems to me that you do not understand what you have asked, because that translation is of the Septuagint; and where commas occur it is to call attention to the fact that there the Septuagint said more than was to be found in the Hebrew text, and where stars occur is to draw attention that there occurs something added by Origen from the translation of Theodotian, which was translated from the Greek. In these other translations I declared what I understood from the Hebrew, following rather the truth of the sense than the order of the words. And I marvel that you read the Books of the Septuagint, not in the purity in which they wrote them, but as they were emended by Origen, or, better said, corrupted by him, with asterisks and marks. But you do not wish to read the interpretation of a Christian man, more especially as what is added is the translation of a man who, after the Passion of Christ, made himself a Jew and became a blasphemer? Do you really wish to follow the Septuagint? Then do not read with stars or commas, but erase that out of your books, as a favourer of the old style, and in

doing this you will condemn as many books as there are in the library of the Church, for you will scarcely meet with any which will not have them. To the new syllogism which you bring against me—*if the things be obscure, so also you may err in them; and if clear, your labour is in vain*—with the same do I wish to reply to you. All the saintly learned men who have interpreted the Scriptures previous to ourselves have interpreted either what was obscure or what was clear; if what was obscure, how do you dare after them to interpret what they could not interpret, more especially in the case of the Psalms, which you have yourself commentated upon after so many grave authors? And if what was clear, a superfluous labour is yours to commence declaring what to them was not hidden. If your dilemma has any force against me, it must have in like manner against yourself, and what is more, with it we should come to the conclusion that it were not due or allowable to any one to speak after the first interpreters, because the first who occupied the place would now refuse the leave or permission for any one else to enter in.

As regards what appertains to my translation, I have not assumed by it to destroy the ancient one, which from the Greek I have translated into Latin for my friends, but to show the testimonies which the Jews left behind them in their translations, in order that to our Latins should be made known what is in the Hebrew text. He who should object to read it, let him not do so. I urge no one to read it. And, if you say you willingly read what I translated from the New Testament, because there are many who can judge in what therein should be doubtful, and that this cannot be done in the Hebrew, so also might you presume of me that I would not in any way forge anything in the Old Testament, nor would I add anything of mine;

and, if you doubt it, ask the Hebrews, for it would be a difficult thing if they should all have conjured themselves either against me or in my favour."

Here ends the force of this controversy as regards the point in dispute, and from what has been said may be judged who remained victor. Although the Church does not give us leave to judge, since she has approved and embraced the side of St. Jerome—for, as I said above, she has put aside all other translations for that of this saint—yet that St. Augustine should have been discontented with such pious and holy labours is not to be marvelled at after we have seen the motives which, although in him without duplicity, yet in the original persons had been vicious. Hence let it from henceforth never be a source of grief to any one should his labours not satisfy all, since there actually could have arisen an occasion for those of Jerome's to dissatisfy Augustine.

Let us pass on to the second point, which is the principal one. The saintly bishop very carefully read the works of our saint, and was greatly pleased with his genius; the purity of doctrine delighted him, and he admired the variety of the lesson: he was proceeding carefully, hoping to find something which would afford him a motive for starting some discussion and instituting a correspondence on the sacred letters. He read the *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Galatians.* He came to chap. ii., where the apostle St. Paul says he resisted St. Peter before all, because he was worthy of reprehension. Before the arrival of some of the Jews from where Jacob dwelt, St. Peter sat with the Gentiles and refrained himself from nothing; after these came he used to withdraw, and did not eat with them. From this the Gentiles took occasion for scandal, believing that thereby St. Peter gave them to understand that it was necessary to keep the law, etc.

From this text of St. Paul Porphyrius took occasion to accuse the apostle of daring to reprehend St. Peter in public. Julian the Apostate, Marcion the heretic,[1] and subsequently others of our own times have taken also occasion from this same text to reprehend St. Peter of grave sin in the preaching of the Gospel. Thus it occurs that some reprehend the one apostle, others the other, and according to this both the one and the other err, or both, or all, which is the most certain. In order to reply to Porphyrius and vindicate St. Paul of being daring and St. Peter of sin, our doctor says in the *Commentaries* that some affirmed that this Cephas was not St. Peter, but another of the seventy disciples. (This was the opinion of Clement of Alexandria and of Œcumenius in the extracts which he made of Eusebius.) St. Jerome reprobates this opinion at the end of the *Commentary* with evident reason. In the first place, because neither in the Gospel nor in the whole of the sacred Scripture is there another Cephas but St. Peter, who is so called in the Gospel and in this Epistle; because in the Hebrew and the Syrian languages *Cephas* is the same as *Petra* in the Latin and in the Greek tongues. It is seen, moreover, that in all the argument of this Epistle he is speaking of the three principal apostles, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, called columns of the Church, and equals with them him who is called *Cephas*; and although St. Luke did not record this event in the Acts of the Apostles (which is the argument of the others), it has no effect, because he kept silence on a number of other things, which were noteworthy. But, putting aside this opinion, St. Jerome expounds this text according to Origen, Didymus, Eusebius, Theodosius, and other Greeks; and, forasmuch as the commentary is long, I will condense it briefly, so that it be seen with all clearness, the opinion and its

[1] Magdebur. centur. I, lib. ii.

foundations. "That which St. Paul did," he says, "was to dissimulate and reprehend according to the outward appearance, and thus do those two words sound—*In faciem ei restiti.* And in the same way as St. Peter did adhere to the ceremonies of the law as being in truth a strictly necessary thing, but as dissimulating and dispensed of for the time being as to the rigour of the Gospel, in order that the Jews, who had come from Jerusalem, be not scandalised, so in like manner did St. Paul reprehend, not really, but in appearance, in order to remove scandal from the Gentiles, who were scandalised to see St. Peter observing the law; and in the eyes of these it must be understood he was reprehensible. This, he says, was concerted between St. Peter and St. Paul, that by thus dissembling to win over the Gentiles; for otherwise St. Paul would do wrong, and against the precept of the Saviour, in not first correcting St. Peter privately. Furthermore, St. Paul himself had fallen into this fault, if it was a fault, for he had circumcised Timothy and observed many other things of the law, and it would ill become him to reprehend in truth another for what he himself had been guilty of."

This is the summary of the commentary. St. Augustine read it through; he was not pleased, and he very strongly reprehended, and very much in detail, St. Jerome in two epistles,[1] affirming, firstly, that the reprehension was not done under any concert nor dissimulation, but in all earnest truth; secondly, that St. Peter was guilty of sin. The whole force of St. Augustine's argument rests in that, if it is not taken thus, there is falsehood in the Scriptures, a thing which is a simple impossibility. Because if St. Peter did not sin, and in the sacred pages it be said he was reprehensible, the falsehood is clearly proved, and the great dilemma it involves for St. Paul to say that he did not walk straight

[1] *Epist.* 86 and 87.

in accordance with the truth of the Gospel. If he had come in and walked straight, the falsehood is clear; and once it be admitted that there is falsehood in the holy Scriptures, no one thing in it remains firm. Many times does the saint repeat this reasoning, for undoubtedly it is very grave; and, as he very properly says, if once it be admitted that under some good reason or holy occasion there can be found falseness in the sacred writings, any one will simulate good reasons where it may please him to declare that here or there the text speaks with dissimulation or simulation. Augustine, fully convinced in his reasoning, and deeming that he convinces Jerome likewise by the same, tells him not to make himself a patron of falsehoods, nor favour them, and not to hesitate to correct his sentence, and, as the Latin expresses it, make recantation. "Forasmuch," he says, "as the poet Estesicorus lost his sight through having spoken ill of Helen in his verses, and, on returning to praise her, he regained it, so also is he to do; because Christian truth is more beautiful than Helen among the Greeks, for which more bravely have the martyrs fought against Sodom than the Greeks against Troy. I do not say this," adds Augustine, "in order to open the eyes of your heart, for, please God, you have not lost them, but in order that you may advert, that having them so healthfully and so wide open, I know not for what dissimulation you withdrew them so as not to see the many evils which would follow, if once it be admitted that the saintly writer, for some pious cause, is guilty of falsehood."

From all these words is proved that St. Augustine was ill-informed in respect to our saint, for the reason we have manifested, and that he was minded to give him to understand that there was some one who could open his eyes so that he should not consider himself the only doctor in the world. Too long indeed did our aged saint delay

to reply to these letters, as we have seen; but the continued importunity of his friends, and finding himself with more time and leisure, now that the long assistance entailed by Paula's illness had ceased, gave him the opportunity of replying; and in the first two letters he proceeds with great gentleness, and among other things he says these words: "I have already run my course, and have gone as far as I could; now that you yourself are commencing, and you are soaring with so lofty a flight and wide space, to me belongs the repose; and so that it be made patent that it is not alone yourself who can quote from the poets that which comes to the purpose, bidding me sing the palinode and imitate Estesicorus, who lost his sight by abusing Helen, and regained it by praising her, I bid you also to remember Dares and Entellus, and the proverb which says, *The tired ox treads more heavily* (*El Buey cansado asienta mas fuerte el pie*). In truth I pen these words in sadness. Oh! that I might be worthy to find myself with you and clasp you to my heart, and with sweet colloquies teach you something, or learn of you!"[1] At the end of the letter he concludes in this manner: "O Augustine, behold how great my affection for you must be, that, even provoked as I have been by you so often, would I wish to reply to you, not believing to be yours that which perchance you reprehended in another." To the third letter he wrote through Cyprian, deacon, St. Jerome answers to the purpose, and with some degree of anger.

In regard to what touches this question, his reply, if I comprehend it properly, consists of three points. In the first he manifests that he is no patron of lies. In the second, that the explanation of the text of the apostle, although it is not his, but of the authors quoted, is very good. And in the third, that Augustine speaks dangerously.

[1] *Epist.* 91 and 92.

By the first he proves, because he seems to think Augustine did not understand the explanation of the Greeks, since, according to those authors, St. Paul does not say that he reprehended in truth St. Peter, but *in faciem*, which means according to appearances, openly and outwardly; and this is a manner of speech used by St. Paul, as when he says to the Corinthians,[1] *Quæ secundam faciem sunt videtis*, and again,[2] *Qui in faciem gloriantur et non in corde*, and once again, *Homo videt in faciem*. In all these places *facies* means *outward appearance*. Moreover, St. Paul does not say that it was reprehensible in truth and in effect, but in the opinion of the Gentiles, who were scandalised. And as to what he says that he had perceived, that they did not walk straight according to the evangelical truth, he does not say of St. Peter, but of the Jews who were with him; and thus there is no untruths here, since St. Paul does not say further than what passed, and what he did, and all was by the agreement which both had made, and thus did St. Paul declare it. This explanation St. Augustine did not understand, and for this reason did he think there was some harbouring of falsehood.

The second proves that this exposition is very good, and that it must necessarily be so. Because, if St. Peter was well aware, and St. Paul knew that the ancient ceremonies were no longer of value after the publication of the Gospel, and both one and the other perform the self-same things, when they perceive that it is needful for the advantage of Jews and Gentiles, who had recently come to the faith, how then can it be understood that St. Paul reprehended in truth publicly and without admonition St. Peter in so grave a matter, when he himself had done the same? Is it not clear that, with reason, heretics would point him

[1] 2 Cor. x. [2] 2 Cor. ii.

out as a daring man, and St. Peter as one who erred in so grave a thing? St. Paul himself says, "I make myself a Jew with the Jews, in order to win over the Jews." He circumcised Timothy so as not to scandalise them. In Cenchrea he cuts off his hair. In Jerusalem he purifies himself, in accordance with the Jewish law, to persuade the Jews that he is not unmindful of the ancient ceremonial; and yet is he to reprehend veritably in Peter what he has himself done so often? St. Jerome concludes this part by saying, "It does not appear to me, Augustine, that there is much difference between your opinion and mine, because I say that Peter and Paul, through fear of the faithful, who had come from the Jews, employed Jewish rites and pretended to observe them; and you affirm that they did so through mercifulness, making themselves infirm with the infirm, with a compassionate spirit, not with the aims of falsehood. Be it what it may, either one way or the other, either through fear or through compassion, they dissembled what they were not."

As to the third point, it appears to our saint that St. Augustine speaks dangerously in saying that the ancient ceremonies were to be kept after the publication of the Gospel, and that not for that did St. Paul reprehend St. Peter (these are words of St. Augustine), because, had he wished to do so, he would not have done any unbecoming or false thing. St. Augustine added these words, "without being necessary to salvation." St. Jerome says: "I do not understand this; because if they do not bring salvation (*salus*) or advantage, why should they be kept? And, if they are to be kept, without doubt they must bring some profit; moreover, in accordance with what you say, they make themselves martyrs by observing them, because this cannot be a matter of indifference, but that their observance is necessarily either good or bad. You say it is good. I say

it is bad for the Jews and the Gentiles who already believed in Christ, and thus, if I mistake not, in this part, to avoid a difficulty, you fell into another, and fearing the blasphemy of Porphyrius you dash into the snare of Ebion, judging that those who came of the Jews will keep the law; and, as you see that this is a dangerous thing, you started a glossary, tampering with some words which are not to the purpose, saying, *without being necessary to salvation*, as the Jews thought, or under some deceitful dissimulation, the which St. Paul reprehends in St. Peter. Hence, Augustine, St. Peter kept the law dissimulating, and this reprehender of Peter, without dissimulating and in very truth, kept the law. Well do you defend St. Paul, saying that he did not dissimulate the error of the Jews, but that in truth he fell into this error; nor does he wish to imitate St. Peter, who did dissimulate that in which the Jews erred, and made himself a Jew in all liberty. New indeed for certain, and never-before-seen clemency in the apostle, who, desiring to make Christians of the Jews, of a Christian makes himself a Jew!"

Thus stands the entire sentence of St. Jerome. As soon as Augustine perceived the goodness and the spirit, so truly catholic, of this holy man, and that he had resented somewhat his letters, and was offended at his manner of speech, he replied with another full of love and humility, asking a thousand pardons, saying: "That he had well felt the force of his arm and the heavy blows of the staff of the aged Entellus; and he besought him, if he had offended him (a thing he was far from meaning) with his letters, like an old ox to set his foot on him as heavily as he wished, for he was prepared to be stamped on." And other many saintly endearing expressions does he employ: he appeases him in a hundred ways; he humbles himself so movingly, endeavouring with profound

humility (worthy virtue of Augustine!) to make every satisfaction.[1]

Every time I read this epistle I am moved to tears, and love and worship that soul so blessed. Let the reader peruse it, and with me he will leisurely see the beauty of it, as with loving expressions he speaks in this strain. "So many things do I see, and are revealed to me in the letters that have been able to reach me written by your hand that I would wish nothing better in all my desires than to be close to you; and, forasmuch as I am unable to do so, I am thinking of sending to you some of these my sons for you to teach them, if I should be found worthy of a reply; because without doubt I do not feel myself to possess such a wealth of science and knowledge in the sacred Scriptures as I perceive and feel there is in you." In another epistle[2] St. Augustine writes again to him in a lengthy manner upon this passage of St. Paul, and defends his opinion with much skill. In that part where St. Jerome remarks on the Christians keeping the old law, he further declares himself, and says he forgot to add a word which already he, when writing against Faustus the Manichean, had put, and that was to distinguish the period of time in which the Jewish law could be kept by Christians without placing in it confidence of salvation, or giving it any virtue whatever, and this was in that early time when began to be divulged and preached the Gospel and law of grace. This distinction of three periods, one before the Gospel, the second subsequently, when proclaimed, and the third, when already published and established, renders the sentence of St. Augustine safe. In the first period the old law was of profit, and necessary for salvation, although it was not perfect. In the second it was neither of necessity nor damaging,

[1] *Epist.* 15, in Operibus D. Aug., t. 11.
[2] *Epist.* 19.

because in it no confidence was placed; solely it was permitted, and without sin some of the things in it were practised, as in honour of the law recently dead, so as to bury it with veneration, and thus it was not pernicious. In the third period Augustine agrees with Jerome, and says as follows: "I clearly confess with you that whosoever now, or at any time, both as regards Jews and Gentiles, shall observe the Mosaic law, will descend condemned to hell, because it is deadly and pernicious; and I even add that whoever should keep it, even assumedly, will go to hell. And as you, O Jerome, will not admit that St. Paul now, either assumedly or disguisedly, would keep the law, neither do I admit that he would have observed it in truth. And, whereas you admit and concede that in the period near to the publication of the Gospel, Paul and Peter observed it dissimulatingly, I myself admit that they observed it religiously and truly, in reverence for its past virtue, and as a holy thing which had been, and did not reject it as a thing of Gentile rites."

This last point of difference between these two bright luminaries appears easy, and consists rather in the name than in the thing. Their difference is not, as some think, in that St. Augustine sets three epochs and states, and St. Jerome two, for this is to read without attention; for, in the first instance, St. Jerome reprehends St. Augustine for not making a difference after the death of Christ and the coming of the Gospel, and would say that the law could be observed; and thus St. Augustine saw that St. Jerome was right in pointing out what had been left unsaid by oversight, and had been said in another part. The difference between the two saints lies in the middle state between the perfection and full preaching of the Gospel and the period previous to the Gospel, which is the time when the Gospel began to be published, after

the coming of the Holy Ghost, and I say it appears a question of name. Because, although they may disagree among themselves after Christ, it was lawful for some time to keep the law, with the aim and spirit of observing it, albeit they did not place in it any hope of salvation: and Augustine may say they did, and speak of this middle time, when the Gospel had not been sufficiently promulgated; and St. Jerome may say to the contrary that it was not at this period lawful to the apostles, nor any one, to observe it in truth. Nevertheless they agree, however, that in this middle epoch it was lawful to perform something of the law, whensoever it might be useful for the faithful. This St. Jerome calls *dispensation*, employing that word as in our day is done by jurists; and not for that he thinks that this is to be called rigorously to observe the law, nor does it seem to him lawful to employ this manner of speech, since they did not do this with the object of keeping it, but for the profit of others, pretending to keep it, and dissimulating with pious caution, for this is lawful in such like things and in many others of the kind found in the sacred Scriptures.

To St. Augustine it appears that it suffices for one to be said to keep the law, if he does what the law enjoins, be the end what it may, either for advantage or for edification, or for reverence of the law, whence it is seen that it is little more than a question of name whether it be called keeping the law or not to do the things of the law, dissimulating, or with piety, or some other motive. St. Jerome understood this very well, and he perceived the point of discord between himself and Augustine was little or nothing, as we have seen from his words. Hence it will be perceived how out of the purpose and far from the thought of these two saints were the many questions which here some scholastics assume to distinguish between

both saints, since on the principal point the difference is so slight.

In my judgment, where these saints are most at variance is in that St. Jerome will not admit that in St. Peter there was sin, and that, if there was, St. Paul is guilty of the same, and that in neither the one nor the other is there sin, and that there was an agreement between them as regards this reprehension. St. Augustine plainly accuses St. Peter, and says that St. Paul reprehended him truly. St. Augustine has been followed by nearly all the scholastics, tempering the sentence of the saint, saying that it was a venial sin of St. Peter's. Because, although to constrain or, so to say, to induce towards Judaism, and not come to the Gospel on a good footing, be a most grave sin in its kind, yet in St. Peter it was very slight, because he did not intend this, and he did not do it knowingly, rather inadvertently, for he did not assume anything but the good of the Jews recently come to the Gospel, although from this small inadvertence of his followed evil. In my opinion—if this be of any value—if the reprehension of St. Paul was done in truth, his words would have a deeper meaning than this, because, to say that they neither entered nor walked in the Gospel does not sound inadvertence, nor a thing so venial as it is made out to be, and therefore St. Augustine, who maintains that the reprehension was truly meant, defends his opinion with all the spirit he can in the last epistle to St. Jerome,[1] and is very severe against St. Peter, and still more so in *De Agone Christiano*, where he places this dissimulation and withdrawal among the grave sins of St. Peter, and styles it by the expression *depraved and superstitious simulation*, and sets it next to the denial, and says that he obtained pardon for both the one and the other sin.

[1] *Epist.* 19, D. August. *De Agone Christ.* c. 30, and in *Comment. Epist. ad Galat.*

Hence, I am very dissatisfied with the opinion of St. Augustine, because great liberty was thereby taken by the heretics of these times to reckon this among the other fifteen sins which boldly and falsely were laid against St. Peter.[1] We might in a contention of such gravity between Jerome and Augustine upon the reprehension by St. Paul of St. Peter divide the victory and assign equal laurels to both the saintly disputants, saying with Jerome, Chrysostom, Theodore, Eusebius, Origen, Cassian, and others[2] that St. Peter in no manner sinned in this part, and with Augustine, Ambrose, and others that St. Paul reprehended him without simulation or dissimulation. This appears difficult of agreement, but it is not so if we try to examine the history of the case, and see how that could truly have occurred; and it appears that St. Paul himself opens the door to that consideration. It is evident that this did not occur all at once, nor at one place: the Jews coming from Jerusalem, who had become Christians; the withdrawal of St. Peter from the Gentiles; their taking scandal; the reprehension of St. Paul—all this had its course, and time passed. At the commencement, when St. Peter began to withdraw from the communion with the Gentiles who from Antioch had believed, one here and there withdrew with him; and at this the people of Antioch did not take offence, nor could they do so, for they knew that St. Peter did not observe the legal things, nor did he comprehend they were of importance; thus had he been taught, not only by word but in fact, eating and drinking with them what they as Gentiles ate before being baptized, without retrenching anything. Therefore they clearly knew that St. Peter did

[1] Magdeburgenses.

[2] Chrysost. ad Galat. et lib. 1 de Sacer. Teodor. ad Galat. et alii Cassianus collatione 17, Œcumen Euseb. Emisen Didymus ad Galat. Theophil. Clement. Alexand. Apollinar. et Orig.

not do this excepting as a condescension to Christianised Jews, and so as not to scandalise them, which is the self-same doctrine taught by St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians in a very full manner. And if they did not perceive this it was no fault of St. Peter but their own that they did not advert to a thing so clear; and without doubt at first this could not have been a grief to them, but, as subsequently this dissimulation of St. Peter's was imitated by many others and even St. Barnabas, and they withdrew with him, the people of Antioch felt this very deeply, seeing themselves forsaken and contemned, and even held as unclean by those very Christians from Judaism. For which cause some of them, not wishing to see themselves cast out of such company, determined to follow what the Hebrews did, and keep the Jewish rites. When St. Paul saw this, and that what St. Peter had commenced with prudence and good counsel degenerated, and carried with it such disadvantage that the Christian converts from the Gentiles were turning to the Jewish law, he judged right no longer to dissimulate the affair, but reprehend and resist St. Peter before them all (because he was well aware what his spirit and intention had been), both because the Jews, who had withdrawn with him, ought not to fall into error, thinking that the law was necessary in the Gospel, and because, should some of the Gentiles have conceived a false opinion of St. Peter in this affair, they would put it aside on seeing that St. Peter did not contradict that which St. Paul did, and from this resistance should result, not that St. Peter was reprehended, but both the one and the other should be cured and the scandal removed (on the part of St. Peter purely passive), forasmuch as he had done nothing that was unlawful, nor in a bad spirit, rather to the contrary acting with prudence, albeit that without his understanding it the damage had

increased. And despite that St. Peter had entered into this justly and saintly, yet owing to the imprudence of the people of Antioch, or through many who followed him, the matter had become dangerous, and thus worthy of St. Peter being admonished and forewarned, which is what St. Paul calls reprehensible, not because he had sinned, but by reason of the damage which was accruing, and undoubtedly he would sin grievously if, on being admonished, he should persevere in it hereafter. For then the people of Antioch would at once judge the Gospel weak and of small virtue, since it had need of being assisted by the Mosaic law. And if St. Peter had perceived this, as appears clearly that St. Augustine admitted, he could not be excused saying it was a venial sin, because it was nothing less than a very grave one, and as such does St. Paul depict it, a thing which it were more than temerity to admit in the apostle St. Peter, and a great favouring of the heretics. Hence both our saints remain equal in loss and gain, and more than equal in charity. St. Jerome properly says that St. Peter did not sin, and St. Augustine says well, in that St. Paul reprehended him in the sense we have declared.

These holy contentions ended in much charity and in great love, both the one and the other remaining well satisfied with one another, and that which the Origenists had aimed to do, which was to set them at variance, ended quite the reverse, because both desired nothing more ardently than to enjoy each other's society personally. They greatly deplored the absence and the distance, and, in order that this discourse should be concluded pleasantly, let us listen to Augustine speaking to our saint, where, among other things, he says :—

"I beseech you greatly, by the deep love of God by which we were redeemed, not to think that the gifts and

virtues which by divine mercy are in you enclosed, and which I spoke of in my epistles, have been mentioned with false praise and caution, and that, if in any one thing I have sinned against you, I pray you to pardon me. And that which I said of you, alluding to some deed of a poet rather more impertinently than learnedly, I pray you not to turn it, nor interpret it against you further than it sounds, because I at once added that I did not say what I did about receiving the eyes of the heart (because with the favour of God you had not lost them), but that, since your eyes were healthful and well opened, you should be warned, and imitating and solely making the recantation and palinode, if we should have written something which needed correction, and not by reason of the blindness of Estesicorus, which I did not attribute to you, nor did I ever fear it. Hence once more I beseech you that with all simplicity and freedom you correct me where you may see I need it. Because, although according to the dignity of the titles which are already received in the Church, the bishopric may be higher than the priesthood, nevertheless Augustine is less than Jerome, although from an inferior correction he should not be despised." [1]

Many other things does the great Father proceed with deepest humility to say. He desires him to communicate with him about his labours, and in respect to his writings, which he feels will be of great profit to him. By the hands of Profuturus he sent to St. Jerome some of his works for him to peruse and correct, for thus he speaks in another epistle: "This brother takes some works and writings of ours, and if you deemed them worthy of perusal I would beg of you to correct them, because I do not understand them otherwise than as they are written.

[1] *Epist.* 19, August.

The just man will correct me in mercy and reprehend me, but he will not anoint my head with the oil and adulation of the sinner, for he loves better who comes reprehending than the flatterer with his adulations. I myself can be but with great difficulty a good judge of my own works, for I would err either from overmuch love or from fear. At times I see my own defects, but I would prefer to hear of them through my superiors, because, when I with good reason find fault with myself, I easily turn to flatter myself and think I rather sinned through fear than from any reason I had." In these epistles passages such as these occur with great frequency. St. Jerome, on the other hand, never ceases praising Augustine, and writes to him very often, beseeching him to hasten to destroy the heresy of Pelagius. Thus were the contentions and questions brought to a conclusion and settled, which occupied little less than fourteen years, owing to delays in the receiving of the letters and in the replies coming to hand, due in a great measure to the action of malicious men.

When these saints understood one another, nothing occurred to induce them to sever the bonds of love and charity which united them. Both sought the same end, which was truth, and to please Christ and serve the Church. Hence, whensoever one of them thought the other was straying from this aim, they did not excuse one another, though they loved each other deeply. The example in question confirms it. St. Peter and St. Paul loved one another greatly, and in perfect charity. St. Barnabas and St. Paul equally so; each of these judged that his path was the safer, and, as our doctor expresses it, those whom the Gospel had never parted were divided by long seas.[1] They remained (says St. Chrysostom[2]),

[1] Lib. 2, in Rufin.

[2] Chrysost. in Acta.

these saints, with their individual natures and conditions, and with these each one in his manner aimed at serving God. And thus do we see in the prophets: Elias, severe, a spirit of fire, full of ardent zeal; and Moses, the meekest among all who were born, yet both were present at the Transfiguration of the Lord. Similarly did St. Paul manifest himself in the reprehension of St. Peter, and in not taking with him Mark, severe and zealous; St. Peter, merciful with the Jews who had newly come to the faith; Barnabas, tender towards Mark, in order to take him with him; Augustine with Jerome, deeming that he admits falsehoods in the sacred letters; Jerome with Augustine, judging that he does wrong in admitting the old law after the Gospel, and all this occurs within one great heart of love, with charity remaining in its own place. These contentions of the saints are not commenced from human motives; no one thing of earthly mould is assumed, hence they all end in the things of heaven. From this is seen that wonderful effect of love, which results from these encounters—the soul is more greatly enkindled in divine things when touched with the flint stone and the steel of contradiction; she is the tinder prepared to receive the spark, and at once catches fire and raises a flame, then the smoke of prayer and the perfume of charity ascends straight on high. On the contrary does it act in those who take another road, for, as their eyes are bent down to the earth, on being touched they smoke full of the vapour of their contentions as to whether each is of greater value than the other, and appears greater; and not only do the contentions of these not end in any good, but they proceed from bad to worse.

BOOK THE SIXTH

SEVENTH AGE—ADVANCED OLD AGE

PROEM

In a book which St. Augustine wrote against two epistles of the Pelagians, speaking of St. Jerome, he says: "St. Jerome, a man learned in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, passing from the Western Church to the Eastern, dwelt in the Holy Places and laboured in the sacred Scriptures until the age of decrepitude."[1] St. Augustine styles the *age of decrepitude*, if we follow him in his work *On the Eighty-three Questions*,[2] that period of life which extends beyond sixty years; hence, according to this, it is not saying much to state that he had arrived at this age of decrepitude. This is also the opinion of Philo in his *De Mundi Opificio*. This period is so called, either because man has not only ceased to grow or to improve bodily, but rather to the contrary he seems to decrease and bends down, becomes weaker, and seems naturally to imply that he is seeking to return to earth, as was said by the witty Poet:[3]

Et jam confectus senio, recurvus,
Corpore destituor: vitæ quoque cedo, valete;

or, because man is so close upon the limits of his life that from day to day he awaits death, faltering at every step he takes. From the word in Latin *creper*, which signifies

[1] August., *Contra duas epist. Pelag.*, t. 7.
[2] August., lib. 83, t. 4.
[3] Cocaius.

doubtful, and from which is derived the term *crepúsculo* (in Spanish), twilight, is implied the short period of dim light which intervenes between the full light of day and the approaching night; because so is the life of such as have arrived at this advanced age, which is, like a twilight, neither properly alive nor actually dead. The sun divides its path during the course of the year into two parts of the zodiac (that imaginary circle in the heavens along which the sun travels, so called by astronomers). The one is always raised to what our sight attains and ends, which is called horizon; the other half is below whilst the sun is rising and is above the signs which terminate our horizon, which are called *septentrionales*: then it appears that all things live, they are joyful and fresh. When it turns to the other signs which are hidden in the *austral* part, all things wither and remain as though bereft of virtue, and are sad. Such is also the life of man, which, according to the limits God has set of 120 years, the one half up to sixty appears to possess verdure, and is refreshed with vital heat and moisture. On attaining to the sixtieth year, from henceforth all is winter and sadness: there is the deficiency of that heat which is the sun, and that virtue becomes reconcentrated and returns to the bowels of the earth. That rapture of Proserpine, assumed by the poets, was nothing else but the virtue of the earth in order to reproduce the plants and crops, that had become reconcentrated, and gone after the sun to its depths, where it was said Pluto had his seat and kingdom. And these are the lugubrious feasts of Adonis, which our saintly doctor says were celebrated in July; because then the sun, which is Adonis, quitted Venus and went with Proserpine. The half portion of the earth we inhabit was called *Venus*, and the other half *Proserpine*; and whereas one half of the year the sun is there and the remaining half in the other, they assumed these loves of

Adonis. And the same philosophy holds good in the life of man.

With a far more beautiful manner of philosophy did the Holy Ghost tell us the conditions of this half age which is still wanting (very few men attain to it) by the mouth of Solomon in Ecclesiastes. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth,"[1] he says, "before the time of affliction comes and the years draw nigh of which thou shalt say, They *please me not.* Before the sun and the light, and the moon and the stars be darkened, and the clouds return after the rain." It is a manner of speaking among the Hebrews to say, *before the time of affliction comes*: "times or days of affliction," he calls those of this latter age, because there are no days without complaint, no days of joy, but years of little ambition and desire, because the days are lived in a perpetual infirmity. The paroxysms of a lingering death consist of the darkening of the sight, neither seeing by day or by night, continual runnings and catarrh, and then to be involved in the cloud of death, and increased dejection of all the members, after that of the head, and adds: "In that day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, the hands which keep all things shake, and the strong man shall stagger, the strong limbs, in whose virtue the whole edifice depends: and the grinders shall be idle in a small number, by the falling of teeth and gums the mill is idle, and they that look through the holes shall be darkened: and they shall shut the doors in the street upon the teeth, and gums fall out, when the grinders' voice shall be low, when the stomach no longer digests, and they shall rise up at the voice of the bird [in the case of an aged man all noise awakens him, the birds and the cocks crowing take away sleep], and all the daughters of music shall grow deaf, for nothing sounds well to him, nor does music any

[1] Eccles. xii.

longer please him, nor sound harmonious to his ears: and they shall fear high things, they look back on their past lives and behold the sins of their youth, and they know not what God will do with them: and they shall be afraid in the way where they shall go to after death and the judgment of God, and also will look on their past acts, what steps they took, as though, had they walked otherwise, it would have been better. The almond tree shall flourish, the locust shall be made fat. Man is like to the almond tree, which grows grey quickly, and it belongs properly to him, among all other animals, to grow grey,"—a speedy punishment of nature, whereby she teaches us the weakness of strength.

For this reason Jeremias[1] called a *watching rod* the punishment which God willed to mete out, and in the original it says *rod of the almond tree*, because it signified the near and early chastisement. The locust which is mentioned refers to the bending down of the back, owing to the similitude of some of these insects, which have a sort of hump. And after the turning grey of the hair follows the stooping of the back, and crookedness, because the back cannot bear the weight of the body. And man journeys on to the end of his age and its duration, and there to await another longer age over which he has no power to control, but One other more powerful than himself, and *mourners shall go round the market-place.* All the senses and all the parts of man with his powers shall fade away, and become saddened, weeping in old age, and to them all no comfort will be available. *Before the silver cord be broken, and the golden fillet shrinks back, and the pitcher be crushed at the fountain, and the wheel be broken upon the cistern.* The *silver cord*, so called here, is that which the physicians and anatomists style the *spinal marrow*, from whence all movement springs. By the *fillet of gold* is

[1] Hierem. i.

understood the head, and that golden tissue which covers the scalp. The Hebrew word means *head* or *round vase.* The *pitcher* is the gall, and the *fountain* the liver. The gall becomes loaded with the refuse of the liver, which is wrath, and the liver is the fountain of the blood. And by the wheel is meant the lungs, which are always in perpetual movement, opening and shutting, and the Hebrew word means *heaven* or *wheel.* In cisterns no water wells up, but water is poured into it, and the lungs are above the heart, moving as a wheel, and as though over a cistern, which does not generate the blood it has but receives it from another source. *And the dust returns into its earth, from whence it came, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.* The ending of this tragedy is that the earth and dust shall return to earth and dust, as had formerly been, and however much man may strive to pander and entertain the flesh, the sentence will be carried out, despite he may rebel, for which reason it is said *they please me not*, as being against his desire and appetite. The spirit, which is the other part of man, as a thing eternal and without corruption, will return to the fountain whence it came forth, which is the Governor of the universe. Whensoever God is mentioned in the holy Scriptures under the appellation of *Elohim*, it signifies the lordship and government of all that is created, and is always found in the plural number, not only because He communicates His virtue and power to the angels for this governance, but to give to understand the plurality of the Divine Persons, for in these external works they have no division, and are in common to all these; and here also in passing is seen the immortality of the soul when stating that the spirit returns to its Creator. It must needs be a thing substantial and subsistent which returns, for accidents in good philosophy do not return, but end with the individual.

This is the Divine picture of advanced old age. Some wish it to be what Cicero, Marcus Varro, and others called *senium*, which is not an age of itself, but the latter end of this age, and commonly we call it so, because decrepitude does not apply to a man who is no more than sixty years of age (though the canons and laws of the Church appear not to counsel things of penance or roughness towards them, considering them privileged), but to such as have passed the age of seventy, or such as through some infirmity have lost power earlier. To the saints, although this fits in as regards the body, yet the soul travels by another path, becoming more robust and stronger. The holy doctor shows this in an admirable manner in the Epistle to Nepotian, and says that all the vigour and stress of penance, and other brave things done by saints when they are in their manhood, are put down and cast aside in old age: fastings, vigils, hair shirts, sleeping on the floor, and long prayers. One thing alone remains to them, which is wisdom, the enlightenment of the understanding, and great knowledge of divine things: and this is the *Sunamitess* by whom in his old age David was warmed. And this knowledge of divine things does our saintly old man hold firmly in his arms, from it he derives heat, and in such sort that we shall yet see him in this last period of life perform feats of a strong man, an athlete, singing with David: "Lord, Thou has taught me from my youth until now, I will sing of Thy marvels, and even unto old age and white hair do not Thou forsake me."

Let us see him in what he so well understands, full of deepest wisdom, yet with his body weary, faded, and undone.

DISCOURSE THE FIRST

St. Jerome writes Commentaries on the Prophets Daniel and Isaiah. He is stricken by a severe Illness.

When the saintly doctor had concluded writing his Commentaries on the minor prophets, his friends and others who took pleasure in the study and perusal of grave works, would allow him no rest with their importunate pleadings that he should afford them further labours and Commentaries on the sacred books. This was done personally by such as were close at hand, and by urgent letters and messages from the absent ones. Among others, his best beloved ones, Pammachius and Marcella, urged upon him to explain to them Daniel, as appears by the preface to these Commentaries, where he beseeches them to help him by their prayers, so that by their intercession the Lord might be pleased to reply for His servant against the calumnies of the heretics, and more especially those of Porphyrius, who maliciously said that this Book of Daniel had not been written by the prophet, but by some other writer of Antioch of that time. Both Eusebius of Cæsarea and Apollinaris answered him, manifesting this statement to be false, and likewise is it proved by the holy doctor in the *Commentaries on Daniel*, which, despite being brief, nevertheless expressed much in a few words; and, as he says, he only essayed to touch upon some of the more

difficult passages. He might justly call them *Elucidations* rather than *Commentaries*. By these he certifies to us that it was necessary for him to have read many ancient historians, Greek, Latin, Gentile, and Christian, since all these he draws out from the archives of his memory; and this he has done, compelled to it by the occasion, not willingly, but that it may be seen clearly that what was written by the historians of the Gentile people had been long previously seen and declared by the Prophets. These Commentaries greatly pleased St. Augustine, and he makes mention of them in the 20th Book of his *City of God*,[1] where he declares them "diligent and of great erudition."

Later on he undertook the *Commentaries on Isaiah*, a large work and of great profit, full of the Divine Spirit. These last were due to the continued pleadings and prayers of the holy virgin Eustochium. For so does he express it in the Preface of the First Book when addressing her. Let us hear him: "When I had barely finished, after a long time and much labour, the *Commentaries on the Twelve Prophets* in twenty books, and also the *Commentaries on Daniel*, you force me, O Eustochium, virgin of Christ, to pass on to Isaiah; thus what I had promised your saintly mother Paula when she lived you come on me to fulfil to you. This same I remember also to have promised the holy man Pammachius, your brother, and although in love you are both equal to one another, yet you win by your actual presence. Therefore to you and to them I pay what I owe, obeying Christ, Who says, *Examine the Scriptures*, and *Seek and you shall find*." And a little farther on, when declaring the order he proposes to follow in these *Commentaries*, he says a thing which is well worthy of being borne in mind by those who treat on the sacred writings: "After the truth of history [St. Jerome calls history what

[1] August. *De Civitate Dei*, lib. 20. c. 23.

we call literal sense] we have to view and contemplate all things in the spirit; and thus have we to investigate Judea, Jerusalem, Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, and all the rest, in order to search in these the perfect meaning; and in all these things St. Paul (as a prudent architect) places the foundation which is no other than Jesus Christ." A Divine counsel from the head of Jerome, I mean declared by it; for in my opinion the great doctor found the foundation in the word of the prophecy of Isaiah,[1] which commences: *Visio Isaiæ filii Amos, quam vidit supra Judam et Hierusalem.* St. Jerome very well understood that the Hebrew word *khazon* does not only mean *vision,* or to see as you will, or with the eyes of the body, but with the sight of the soul most penetrating and in high contemplation; from whence the name was taken of the Prophets, who called themselves *those who see.* It also means *revelation,* because God manifested to them, and revealed clearly and distinctly, what things they should have to go through, not only externally and in the course of their history, but in the spiritual state of the Church, in the secret of the souls of whom is Christ (as our saint says), the foundation and the head. He who with this mind should proceed penetrating and searching the holy Scriptures, will see many things revealed in the Divine secrets. But let no one enter in trusting to his head or genius, but as Jerome entered, after a very penitential life, always making war on the inferior part, on this old Adam, by fastings and frequent prayer, and above all, with a heart very much detached from wordly interests, from all the pretensions of the vanity of the world; and furthermore, very humble in seeking masters to set him on the right road, and not make himself his own teacher: a thing greatly abhorred always by St. Jerome.

[1] Isaiah i. 1.

It is a thing worthy of derision and even of tears, to witness the daring with which many of those of our times who are deficient of any of these preparations, yet at once attempt to treat upon the sacred Scriptures, and even, if you please, to comment upon them, and make books to sell, as though it were only a thing of commerce. But no more of this, since it becomes offensive, and I only beseech them to learn for their disillusionment, such as attempt this class of merchandise, the words of the Prefaces of St. Jerome, as to how they are to enter upon the study of the holy Scriptures; and they will perceive, if they read attentively, that, as I have already often remarked, all his works are offsprings conceived in prayer—not alone his prayer, but also those of as many as had besought him to engage in these explanations. The saint trusted much to prayer, and to the prayers of these his trusted friends, for they were all saintly persons, well knowing that the value is great of the prayer of the just man. He divided the whole scheme of the *Commentaries upon Isaiah* into eighteen books. From what he states in the Proems to these said books will be gathered that the work occupied him some years. At times he had the thread of his work severed by the ordinary occupations of the government of his monasteries; the number of foreigners and guests who resorted to him was numerous, and a continual stream, quite sufficient to take up the greater portion of the day. Moreover, the frequent illnesses which attacked him were great drawbacks, and during the period of penning these *Commentaries* he had two severe attacks, long and dangerous. In the Preface to Book XIII. he gives us to understand that he had been at the point of death, and all his friends feared for him that ere he should reach port the little bark would perish in the wreck; and he beseeches the Most Blessed Virgin to plead with our Lord with continual prayers to restore him to his former state of

health, in order he should finish the work he had commenced. In the Preface of Book XIV. he says as follows :—

"The Lord, Who looks on the earth and makes it tremble, Who touches the hills and they smoke, Who, speaking in Deuteronomy says, *I will kill, and I will give life; I will wound, and I will heal*, also makes my earthly body to tremble and to shudder with frequent sickness, to which it has been said, *Thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return;* and therefore, as though forgetful of my condition and human destiny, He admonishes me oftentimes, that as man and already advanced in age I may be made cognisant that I am very close upon death, of which is written, *Why do you glory, earth and ashes?* Thus He Himself, Who wounded me with so sudden an illness, also healed me with incredible speed, rather wishing to terrify me than to afflict me, rather to move me to amendment than to scourge me. Hence, knowing Whose is all that I live for, and perchance that the cause of deferring my death is in order that I should bring to a conclusion the work, which I had commenced on the Prophets, it is my desire to give up myself altogether to this occupation, and, as though placed on a high watch-tower, to contemplate from thence—not without pain and wailing—the tempests and the wrecks on the sea of this world without any present thing giving me any trouble, but simply looking into the future, esteeming naught the opinion and the gossip of men, but fearing only the judgments of God. And you, Eustochium, virgin of Christ, who with your prayers assisted the sick man, pray now for the healed man for the grace of Christ, in order that with the same spirit as the Prophets spoke future things I may myself enter into that cloud and abyss, and comprehend the Word of God, which is not heard with the ears of the flesh, but of the heart, and say with the Prophet: *The Lord gives*

me a docile tongue, in order that I should know when it is expedient for me to speak,—these being the first words, which head Book XIV. of Isaiah."

In the Preface of Book X., excusing himself for the haste with which Pammachius urges him to finish Isaiah, in order to commence Ezechiel, he says he has already arrived at a great age, and his body is very weak, and unfit for much work, fatigued as he is by long illness. I do not know what more a man of iron frame could do than what our saint does. But to saints all things appear little; and as the desires of the soul in them are so much alive, they are so exalted, generous, and inclined towards great things, that they cannot suffer with patience the limited powers of the body, and are taken out of themselves, urged on by the spur of the spirit to over-exertion. From all this proceeds that few are the saints who have enjoyed robust health; these are the causes for their usual ill-health and sickness: they wish to run after the Spouse, Who is speeding swiftly before them, if no more than to keep Him in view; they suffer an agony out of all measure, and when they can do no more, they wake up the city with the Spouse, and cry, "*Draw me, we will run after Thee.*"[1] And contemplative men lovingly complain to God, such as have practised some exercises, and have looked attentively into things divine, because He did not give them other bodies, either more delicate, I mean more pure, more divested of the grossness of earth, to be as though aerial or on fire, like some depict the angels to be, in order to rise with greater lightness to where the desires of the soul impel them; or, if not so light as that, at least not so fragile and breakable, but as robust as those of other living things, who are not overcome by unmeasured labours, or become sick, as our bodies do, which by a mere slight

[1] Canticles i.

draught of air are put out of harmony, and any childishness upsets them. Some reply (who have also wished to philosophise on this question) that in all the spheres and heavens God has set those who sing His praises, and in all of them there are creatures who have a part in the discourse and arrangement which adorn that choir. In the air there are His spirits to praise Him; in regions higher still He has His own, and each one has his proportion assigned according to the place he inhabits, and he is circumscribed (so to say, to use a scholastic term). From this follows that, if men were formed of bodies more subtile and spiritualised, the theatre of the world would be left without a proportion of inhabitants, in whose choir would be wanting the music and choir to echo and resound the Divine praises; where speculation is made contemplating the marvels of God, returning Him thanks, lauding and publishing Him abroad. For this reason it was necessary that their bodies should be made so, and, although bodies, yet of so high a mould that it is in truth one of the most noble forms that exist for the Divine praises of all that is below the heavens; and, moreover, so fragile and of short duration, so that they should not linger long in the labours to which they are subject, according to the proportion they bear to the earth, the element most worked of all. And their Creator determined furthermore to draw them out of this poverty and raise them up to an eternity without limit as a reward for what in this choir here below they sang in His praise, striving against the weight of the self-same earth, which they possessed with them. He did not wish the body to be so massive or hard as that of the beasts as that thereby it should not perform well the offices of the most noble part; and not because they are more fragile than those of the beasts are they of lesser dignity, but rather as man is of a more divine nature, so also is he of a more fragile body.

From which it springs that man is the best tempered and organised being of all earthly bodies, since it is evident that, where a greater excess of heat exists, less damage is done by the cold, and all the lesser heats are easily overcome by the greater. And, on the contrary, when the cold is more vehement and the composition does not excel in this extreme, less is felt of the external changes of heats or lesser cold, as it easily overcomes and conquers that which is not so intense. Similarly might we philosophise in respect to other qualities which are not so active, where all things are more tempered and reduced to a greater equableness, and these have their grades more equalised: any other which newly comes, counterpoises, conquers, exceeds, and pushes out, joining itself to what it finds here. And from this proceeds the disagreement and the loss of that harmony and balance in which health consists; and forasmuch as in proportion the body of man is better tempered, so also is it more liable to illness and to fail.

From this results that in the finest genius and most apt for divine things (as ordinarily is that of the saints) we generally find more ill-health, forasmuch as their temperament is better balanced, while they themselves employ small care in remedying with art what so many contrary forces are destroying; rather they assist with their own careless treatment of themselves in the neglect of their bodies, so that on a hundred sides they are attacked, and thus become infirm. God arranges and counterpoises to the small powers of the spirit of beasts the great strength of their bodies, and to the small comparative strength of our human bodies the greater excellence of the work. The saints neglect or pay no heed to the one, and the machine easily fails. If saints propose (and foremost among them was Jerome), by fasting continually, by unheard of vigils, by wounding the

body and flinging it on the cold ground during the hours set apart for rest, by the friction of hair shirts and chains and a hundred other schemes of this sort, to keep the body sound and in good health, and have nothing to complain against it, they live very much deceived. Oh, happy deceit!

Alas, for those who live in a worse mistake! because, knowing that these are the means to be employed for attaining so lofty an end, and presuming as Christians that God must needs give them His glory, they yet pamper and treat their bodies, not as temples wherein their souls are to sing the Divine praises, but, as St. Bernard says, as though they were of the School of Epicurus and brought up with Hippocrates! Consider here a thing very far from all philosophy, that generally these pampered Christians attain short life, and all their cares of the body are of small profit, full of a hundred ailments with as many different plasters and remedies, not because they neglected what appertained to the body, but by reason of their neglect in approaching to eat the Body of Christ, and thus springs, as St. Paul says, that there are among us so many infirm, and so many who sleep. On the contrary, the former, who were so neglectful, or rather careful, to maltreat their bodies, live, as it is said, long lives, and by their well-nigh miraculous existence teach that length of years depends on another cause.

Let St. Jerome speak, for at the age he had now attained, for he was very old, as he himself declares to St. Augustine, and confirms it, nearly decrepit, ever watching and writing, praying, fasting, and working, yet he exceeds in length of life the great crowd of Sardanapalus, who are reared up under the shadow only of the name of Christians, and barely see half their days. They deem that the Gospel, which they scarcely believe in, was made to

resuscitate and glorify first the body, and afterwards the soul; they *live* under a great delusion or deceit, and, what is worse, they will *die* in it, and will find themselves dead in body and in soul; death will be the first porch leading to the second death, wherein they will remain for ever.

To the opposite side, or to the right, do the saints proceed; they want to resuscitate first their souls, since they had already died to their bodies, in order that the body should come to enjoy bliss equally with the soul. Then, indeed, will cease altogether pain and wailing, for they shall have passed through all this here below never to return. I have in passing touched on the reason why it occurs to the servants of God to have so many infirmities, and also why, notwithstanding these, they live such long lives, against natural reason,—for the good of this Christian Church.

An event of great joy, had it but lasted, occurred about this time to St. Jerome, namely the arrival from Rome of the saintly matron Fabiola in the Holy Land and at Bethlehem, an event as greatly desired by the saint as it was unexpected. He went out to receive her, accompanied by a large number of religious and holy virgins. She was the guest of the saint for some days, whilst search was made for a dwelling to be prepared for her. On the one hand, the noble matron desired to lead a life of solitude, like so many brave women of that time, yet on the other she did not wish to withdraw herself from the holy Cave of Bethlehem, and the Hostel of Mary. At this juncture there came also the sad news of a great disturbance throughout the East, thrilling the strongest hearts with fear and sadness. This was that from the extremes of the Lake Mœotis, which is now called the *Sea of Tanais*, or the *White Sea*, and from between the Rivers Tanais and the Massagetæ, towns of inhospitable peoples dwelling therein, and from the inaccessible cliffs of Mount Caucasus there

had sallied forth a great horde of Huns with most light-footed horse, and were spreading themselves to all parts, causing death, devastation, and torrents of blood to flow, filling every heart with terror and amazement, and casting the whole world into great confusion. At this time there were in Palestine and all the region called the Holy Land legions of Romans. These, owing to the present disturbed state, had been ordered to Italy, to succour her, and also to put down some revolts among the natives. It was a common report that the ferocious Huns were coming straight to Jerusalem, impelled by greed of gold, as it was said there were quantities in that city. They commenced to strengthen and repair the walls, because, owing to a period of peace, they had been somewhat neglected, and forts and bulwarks were erected. In Antioch all these preventive measures were followed with greater zest. Tyre was projecting to become (as it had been anciently) an insular state, separated from the land the better to defend itself against the attack of the barbarians. And even our beloved Jerome, despite his extreme age, speaks of endeavouring to equip ships and resort to the water's edge, not so much to place himself in safety as to save the holy virgins from falling into the hands of these barbarians.

Among the people there were rife various opinions on this question. As the holy matron Fabiola had not yet unshipped her jewels, and all her goods were still unpacked, as when she arrived, it occurred to her to free herself from this stress of circumstances by returning at once to Rome, since she was not finding here that quiet and safety which she had come seeking for. Our aged saint, with all his spiritual sons and daughters, remained in the monastery and cells, because reports had arrived that the invaders were proceeding to other parts with various designs.

St. Jerome was very grieved at the return of the holy matron to Rome; he bewails the loss of so good an occasion of companionship, because she was a woman of great worth, as appears by the funeral oration which he wrote after her death, addressed to Oceanus. It appears she died but a few days after this journey. Among the singular things done by this holy woman was a public penance she performed in the church of St. John Lateran in Rome, on holy Saturday, in presence of the Pope, all the clergy, and city.

Fabiola was among those who on that day made public penance during the Divine service. She was vested in a coarse habit, her hair dishevelled and loose, her head and face bent to the ground, and shedding abundant tears.

The sin for which she was performing public penance was this. She had married a vicious, sensual man, whom she repudiated and left, according as the laws of the Empire permitted,—this our saint says in her funeral oration; but during the lifetime of this man she wedded another, this being against the laws of the Gospel. This second husband died, and God touched the heart of His servant.

Fabiola belonged to the principal nobility of the city, of the family of Quintus Fabius Maximus, *Cunctator*, of whom the poet Ennius spoke that famous sentence referred to by Cicero, *Unus Homo nobis cunctando restituit rem*, and had assumed the garb of a humble penitent. All the Romans, Christians, and Gentiles were astonished (at the time there were great numbers of Gentiles in Rome), and those who witnessed the scene were moved to tears. St. Jerome tells us it was a subject of great confusion to the Gentiles. It inspired them to great admiration, and with good reason, because never had their vain gods produced a similar effect on the spirits of their worshippers, as being gods who could exercise small power on souls. As a sequel to this public

penance, she entirely changed her life (for this in truth is the effect of true penance), and followed this change by distributing her wealth among the poor, and in founding hospitals. Our saint has declared solemnly that she attended, cured, and washed all descriptions of people who were lepers and suffering from other loathsome complaints, which even persons of pious lives withdraw from. This holy matron would seek out in streets and squares and slums for the sick and the outcast, and in her own arms she would clasp and carry the lepers and cancer patients to the hospitals, where she would tend them, washing and feeding them with her own hands. Many other things of great virtue and true heroism did she perform, which St. Jerome proceeds to recount in this letter and funeral oration. Despite all these holy occupations, it is admirable that she never gave up a single point of the study of the holy Scriptures, like one who perfectly knew that this study is the fountain from which all the many virtues were to flow, and from whence should be drawn the water for bedewing and keeping fresh all these flowers of virtue. Oh, what a great confusion is all this to us! For since we do seek lofty aims, enveloped in vainglory and the desire for public admiration, in order to win good opinion and praise (let us speak plain), so as to gain money, as with other natural arts and sciences equal fruit is not produced in us.

At this point our doctor touches upon the origin of the Huns according to the opinion of Herodotus. There is much to be investigated on this question, both as to the name and classes of Huns, all of which is most obscure and very much involved, and very far from the purpose of this work, therefore we shall not discuss this point, but leave it for a better and more appropriate occasion. Our saint concludes by telling us that after the death of the

saintly Fabiola there were made in Rome most solemn funeral rites, such as had never been seen in that city, and with good reason, for her victories had been greater than those of her forefathers, which had merited the acclamation of Maximus, and she triumphed better over the world, the flesh, and the devil than Furius over the Gauls, Papirius over the Samnites, and Pompey over the men of Pontus.

St. Jerome was blessed in this, that all those who faithfully followed him arrived to great perfection of life, a fact which after the Apostles I do not think had occurred to any other saint.

Here also arises the occasion of treating on the public penances which were formerly in use in the Church, what they were, and what length of time they subsisted, for what reason they were put aside, and other things appertaining to an interesting study of ecclesiastical antiquity; but our Lord, if it so pleases Him, will afford us a more legitimate occasion in which to discuss them.

DISCOURSE THE SECOND

By reason of the entry of Alaric into Rome many Romans resorted to St. Jerome at Bethlehem. He writes the Commentaries on Ezechiel and Jeremias. He also writes other works. Death of the holy virgin Eustochium.

St. Jerome was deeply absorbed in the study of the greater Prophets; he had commented on Daniel; he had brought to a glorious conclusion the *Commentaries on Isaiah*, who are the first and last of the four Prophets. In the hearts of the devoted friends and lovers of the sacred writings their desires were increasing to witness his explanation of Ezechiel and Jeremias, the only two of the Prophets which he had not as yet commented on. Of all who more ardently urged him, and to whom we are most indebted for this work, was the holy virgin Eustochium, and his beloved disciple Eusebius of Cremona.

Both these were near the saint, and lost no occasion of importuning him at all times and on all occasions to undertake the work. He was contemplating beginning Ezechiel, as being the more difficult, when the sad news arrived of the entry of the barbarian Goths into Rome, under the banner of their captains and King Alaric. Together with this sad disaster came also the news of the death of his great friend Pammachius, and of

that of the saintly and beloved Marcella. Each one of these events sufficed of itself to place the saint, who was pious and tender in the extreme, in a state of deep depression.

The great doctor for many days remained dazed and stunned, and, as no one can depict his sentiments more graphically than he who suffered this grief, let us hear his own words when writing to the holy virgin Eustochium in the Preface of the First Book of his *Commentaries on Ezechiel*, where he says as follows: "After having concluded the eighteen books of *Commentaries on Isaiah*, I wished to pass on to the Prophet Ezechiel, a work I had promised your saintly mother of happy memory, O virgin of Christ, Eustochium, and thus place, as it is said, the last stone upon the work of the Prophets, when behold there came to me suddenly the news of the deaths of Pammachius and Marcella, the siege of Rome, and the sad end of many other brothers and sisters. Stricken down by sorrow, I remained stunned; neither by day nor night could I keep my thoughts away from dwelling on the loss, and in deep concern as to the safety and liberation of the besieged, and it seemed to me that I was absolutely a fellow-captive in the captivity of the saints. I could not open my mouth or unseal my lips until I received details of these events, yet meanwhile I hovered between despair and hope, and the sorrows and trials of others I bitterly bewailed, as well as the evils that had come upon them, and thus tormented myself. But now that I know for certain that the bright luminary of the world is extinguished, and, so to say, the head of the Roman Empire cut off, and, speaking in all truth, that the whole world has perished in our city, I remain dumb. I was humbled, and kept silence on the losses: my pain was renewed, my heart was on fire within my breast, and as to my mind my

thoughts were increasing the fire. Then did it seem to me to come appropriately the sentence, *Music amid tears and mourning is out of season.*"

In order to understand this event, and many others which the saint touches upon, for this purpose I will briefly explain the case, following the most approved and best received accounts given by trustworthy authors, more especially that of Paul Orosius, a Spaniard, and a writer of that very time, and from whom nearly all of those who treat on this subject have taken their matter.[1] After Rhadagasus and Alaric had effected the devastation of Illyria and Pannonia, as mentioned above, quoting what our holy doctor has declared, they proceeded to journey round Italy. The men composing the two armies were so numerous that they exhausted the supplies of the lands along the route they passed, and could find no food to eat, though that they took every eatable thing, because no resistance was offered. Then the two barbarian captains decided to divide forces. Rhadagasus took the lead, because this barbarian, who was cruel and a pagan, felt a great desire to spill the blood of the Christians. He was eager to enter into Italy, and with 200,000 men, referred by Orosius,[2] whom he had with him, he essayed to invest the country, and he vowed to consecrate to his gods all the blood of the baptized. When the saintly Emperor Theodosius died, he left two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, who were still quite young boys. He had assigned to them their respective tutors. Rufinus was the appointed tutor of Arcadius, to whom fell the Empire of the East, while Honorius, who came in for the Empire of the West, remained under the tutelage of Stilicho. Both these were men of great prudence and governing powers,

[1] Paul Oros. lib. 7; Blond. lib. 1, dec. 1; Jornandes, Niceph.

[2] Oros. lib. 7, c. 37.

brave soldiers experienced in great deeds, but perfidious and disloyal to their masters. Stilicho, who was more wise and astute, and even the more valiant captain, went out to encounter Rhadagasus. With the dexterity of a good captain, and like one who knows more perfectly the land and all its positions, he was able to drive the enemy to such straits and into inconvenient passes, that it became imperative to the barbarian to withdraw, or, better said, to shut himself up in the mountains of Fiesole, judging to fortify himself there and wait to find a better escape in good time for his men. But he was quite mistaken, like a man new to the country, and became miserably surrounded and enclosed, and without doubt would have perished of hunger.

The Romans on the contrary were well quartered, and so far safe from the enemy that, being in their tents eating and drinking, the state of things came to such a pass that Rhadagasus, finding himself in so extreme a peril, fled and escaped from his men secretly, leaving the others to await nothing short of prisons and death.

Yet the good fortune of the barbarian was not to last, for the cruelties he had practised and the blasphemies he had uttered would not permit him to escape from the hands of the Romans. He was taken prisoner, his men all put to death or made captive, and in a few days his end came, together with those of his own people. The crowds of captive Goths were so large that they were sold in flocks, like animals, and at a very low price. Alaric now remained alone the scourge of Italy (yet God did not wish her to be visited with so rude a scourging as that of Rhadagasus); he was a Christian, although I believe he embraced Christianity through the Arians; he was not altogether bad, nor was he so fierce. He had some encounters with Stilicho, and there were occasions when

he could have vanquished the Goth completely and destroyed him, so that Italy would have remained safe, but, owing to the design he had formed of making his son Eucherius Emperor, it did not suit him to bring the war to a conclusion, because so long as it continued he was Captain-General, and held the reins in his hands; therefore he put off peace as long as he could, and dissembled the victory against Alaric, and, what was most abominable, he convoked in secret other barbarians—Vandals, Swedes, and Huns—to come to Italy, and as Orosius very properly says, in order to robe his son in the purple, he vested the whole world in blood. Alaric well comprehended the advantage Stilicho had over him, and that he could well effect his ruin; he quite saw through his designs, and, in order to free himself of him, he informed the Emperor Honorius of his intentions, pretending thereby to win his favour and make a friend of him. The Emperor suspected Stilicho, and began to fear him (seeing that the warnings of Alaric were proving true). So deeply did he suspect him that he essayed to make use of Alaric, his very adversary, against his own Captain-General.

Such are the chances and inconstancy of human affairs: in a moment friends are turned into enemies, because all depends on earthly interests. Some say that Alaric wished to return to his own land, and that the Emperor secretly desired him not to do so (for he feared far more his domestic enemy). Both the one and the other acted in a feigned manner: all things were done by dissimulation, but meanwhile the venom within was doing its work. The Emperor Arcadius died, and his son Theodosius succeeded him in the Empire. Honorius wanted to pass over to Constantinople, in order to secure the Empire for his nephew, who was still a child. Stilicho

prevented him doing so by saying that he had no need to take that trouble, for he would go himself and do so; all this was done with the aim of rendering himself powerful by grasping everything, and even revolutionising all things, because so long as the wars continued he would be the lord and the one in command, seeking thereby to further his designs.

The journey was started. The soldiers who went with him, either because, as some say, they had already received their orders from the Emperor (as Orosius declares), or, as some will it, for other reasons, mutinied, put him to death, and did not spare his son. It was a great oversight of the Emperor (if the death of Stilicho was due to his orders) not to have provided another Captain to take at once the government of the men-at-arms. Alaric had asked peace of Honorius, and besought him to give him lands where he could dwell with his people. When he saw that Stilicho was dead, he felt convinced that peace was more certain to be effected; hence, as Nicephorus says, he again demanded it (this is passed over in silence by Orosius), and, as the reply was not as he desired, he grew wrathful, and determined to proceed to Rome. He carried out his project: he set siege to the city, and so strictly that the Romans suffered greatly from want of the necessaries of life; he placed great numbers of men to guard the Tiber and prevent any succour coming in. So great was the misery and starvation that a pestilence broke out among the besieged, and the Romans died in countless numbers. Compelled by so many evils, they effected the raising of the siege with a large sum of money paid to Alaric. He agreed, because he himself also desired rest. For this reason, he demanded that, besides the large sum of money which the Romans

should send, they should despatch ambassadors to Honorius in order to effect peace with him.

The embassy, it is believed, was taken by Pope Innocent, who succeeded Anastasius (the Emperor was at the time in Ravenna, a most strong city, on account of the siege); but those who were near Honorius, being against Alaric, prevented this good agreement. God was making use of them as instruments to punish the ungrateful city, which had received so many benefits, for never had Rome altogether given up and eradicated the idols of the former idolatry, and, what is worse, there had entered among the faithless Christians other vices little worse than idolatry itself; and, as Orosius very properly mentions, customs had become so corrupted as in the times of the pagan Emperors, and along with this and as a consequence all good arts and letters were almost banished. The holy Pontiffs (according to Nicephorus) obtained that Alaric should approach the district of Rimini, and that the Emperor Honorius should send to him Jovius, the Captain and Prefect of Italy, in order to treat as to the agreements. Among other clauses and conditions demanded by Alaric was that Honorius should make him his Captain-General, and that he should be so also of the Roman and Gothic army, and this be done authentically and in writing. Other conditions did he demand, not very hard ones, and which would all have been granted by the Emperor, but not this one, which he judged was not in any way convenient. Jovius, who in this part did not manifest much prudence, simply declared to the barbarian that Honorius did not agree to granting him this one, and it is said that he even read to him the order he carried from the Emperor. At this juncture Alaric altogether broke bounds, and, holding himself injured, determined to completely destroy Rome.

He at once raised the camp and published the result of the negotiations. Jovius, who saw too late the bad result, and the small skill he had manifested in the affair, wishing now to mend matters (and because it gave occasion to the Emperor to imagine that he was in league with the barbarian), fell into a greater error, for, in order to purge himself of this suspicion, he made the army of the Cæsars swear publicly that they would never be at peace with the Goths, nor with their kings: an oath very indiscreet to make, even if done on a better occasion. All this served to kindle a greater fire in the hearts of the Goths, and they marched on their task like desperadoes. Notwithstanding all this, the good sense of Alaric (who although a barbarian was no enemy to peace) did not allow him to put aside or forget his natural nobility, and on the road he sent ambassadors to Honorius desiring, through means of some bishops, to come to terms with him. To all this the Emperor turned a deaf ear, manifesting himself very haughty towards him, and far more towards the city of Rome.

Authors never weary of condemning this unconcern of Honorius. Some think that he cared nothing to see Rome destroyed, because he was not on good terms with her. I, for my part, cannot imagine so much evil in a Christian prince, and one endowed with so many virtues as those of Honorius; but there are men of such natural listlessness, who judge that, as they themselves are not of a practical disposition, other men will not carry a design to its complete issue. Honorius must have conceived that the anger of Alaric would be a passing one, and that he would come to peace terms with milder conditions; or that, if all things should go wrong, some arrangement would be made with the city by means of a large sum of money, as on the previous occasion. Within the gates

of Rome there lived a sister of the Emperor called Galla Placidia, a lady of great worth, no less in rank than a daughter of Theodosius, who proved herself of much importance in the saving of the city, as we shall see farther on. At length Alaric arrived with his men before Rome. Those inside the walls attempted to treat on an agreement whereby the wealth of the Romans would be exhausted. Alaric entered her to spite Honorius, who had not wished to make him his Captain-General; and, as lord of the city, he with his own hand nominated Attalus, who was Prefect for Honorius, Emperor; and then that Attalus should appoint him Captain-General. This was carried out, and Honorius began to fear Attalus far more than he did Alaric. Acting under this fear he sent a cringing embassy to Attalus, declaring that he would take him as companion in the Empire, and put away arms, as he had been informed that he was preparing to come against him—from which is seen the natural apathy of Honorius, who was more addicted to enjoying repose and peace, despite a shameful one, than to undertake the cares of warfare. But Attalus sent so contemptuous a reply to Honorius that it brings shame to the face to declare it; furthermore, as he was haughty, he quarrelled with Alaric and Athaulphus. It was due to this that Honorius and Alaric became reconciled and leagued together against Attalus, who, finding himself forsaken, took the middle path as being best in this bad pass which threatened him, to place himself in the hands of Honorius, whom he knew already as a merciful man. The terms of peace were not agreed upon this time between the Emperor and the Goth, and on Alaric, for the third time, treating upon the subject with some warmth, and desirous of establishing peace on a firm basis, it so happened that a captain of the Emperor called Saro, who was General and a great enemy of Alaric,

on hearing of it, and in order to hinder these being effected very swiftly, selected 300 soldiers of the most valiant in the army, and with some others attacked the camp of Alaric. They caught the Goths unawares, surprised them, and slew many; whilst others took to flight, fearing that the number of the assailants was greater than it really was. The wrath of Alaric burst all bounds, and without awaiting further developments, putting aside every consideration, he proceeded to miserable Rome and poured out upon that hapless city the vials of his wrath. He surrounded her and took her; some say it was done by the treachery of those within, as I shall say later on. Yet even here this captain of the Goths did not forget altogether his natural clemency or the dictates of religion, albeit badly learned; for, as to the first, he made a prohibition in his camp that none who should take refuge in the churches and temples, more particularly in those of St. Peter and St. Paul, should be ill-treated, or wounded, or taken captive, nor have their property touched which might have been collected together, and that these sacred dwellings should be held in perpetual security. Moreover, that they should not kill the Romans, but, after pardoning them their lives, they should take charge of the landed properties.

There is no author who has recounted in detail, nor, indeed, scarcely said anything in regard to what Rome suffered in this third and last attempt at devastation. Paul Orosius, who was living in those times, could, and knew very well how to do so; but he has buried all in silence. I believe he did this in order not to increase the sorrow of the Christians, and also not to afford an occasion of joy to the Gentiles, so as to pronounce more blasphemies than had already been uttered. They jeered at the faithful and mocked them that, because their gods had left Rome

and she had delivered herself to the new faith of Jesus Christ, so many evils had come upon her, and she had experienced so great a fall. They were rabid, like dogs, against the Christian religion, blasphemed it as well as Christ. This was the argument of the book St. Augustine wrote called the *City of God*—to defend the Church against these blasphemies, and to reply for the cause of Christ. Undoubtedly, the hapless Romans suffered great trials and miseries in these entries and banishments of the barbarians, and in the rigid prolonged sieges much hunger, famine, pestilence, fears, exiles, deaths, poverty, captivities—a thousand varieties of cruelty, which the fierce, offended Goths vented on them, now that they were victorious and meeting no resistance. The greatest indication of all this that has remained to us are a few brief words of our glorious doctor, which gave me the occasion for writing all the above so greatly to the purpose.

In the Epistle to the Virgin Principia—which is the funeral discourse on Marcella—although short, he yet depicts to us the sad course of events and their unhappy results, saying thus: "Sad and fearful accounts have arrived from the western parts that Rome has been besieged, and that at the price of gold the liberty of the Romans has been purchased; and after being despoiled, they proceeded once again to torture them, so that after spoliation, life also should be forfeited. The voice becomes broken, and sobs deprive me, miserable man, of dictating reasonably the thread of this discourse: the city which had overcome the world has been taken, or rather, it should more truthfully be said, it perished by hunger rather than by the knife, and scarcely could a few be found to be taken as miserable captives. Rendered by hunger rabid, the wretched people within the besieged city seek forbidden food, and it has come to this point that they cut off their own

members; for the woman does not spare the child at her breast, and what she gave birth to a short time before she now devours." These things which our saint bewails here, demonstrating acute misery, were recounted to him by the miserable fugitives who had come flying from Rome to Bethlehem. They described to him those calamities which have obviously to do with the first siege of Alaric; and subsequently other things of the second; and lastly the events of the third, when, as an enemy, he took possession of the whole. The treachery by which Rome was entered this third time is referred to by Baptista Ignatius, who says he found it in Procopius, a Greek author, and he marvels that it should have escaped the translator. Possibly, he says, the copy from which he made the translation was defective. Hence he says that Alaric had Rome under siege for two years, during which time he was unable to effect an entrance; then he resorted to a subterfuge, and pretended he was going to raise the siege of his own will, for which purpose he sent a band of some 300 young men of the most valiant as it were a present to the citizens of Rome. These had received their instructions. They were to serve very diligently their masters, and with every manifestation of affection; and on an appointed day, when the sun would be at its highest, and the people less suspicious of treachery, and the Romans napping and resting, they should all run together to the door called Asinaria; and attacking the guards unawares, put them to death, and then open the doors to allow those who would be outside to enter in.

Meanwhile the Goths were delaying their departure, pretending that they awaited something further that was necessary to them. On the day appointed the 300 men carried out what they were instructed to do: they slew

the guards, opened the doors, and the Goths entered without encountering any resistance, so unawares and wrapped in sleep were the Romans. This narrative appears to me a fiction of the Greek author, nor is it a very likely thing to find so much neglect, so little intelligence, and so great apathy manifested by the Romans. I believe, undoubtedly, that some other Greek, fond of fiction, added this paragraph in Procopius. Others say that an illustrious matron, called Proba, was the one who opened the door to the Goths, moved by compassion at beholding the Romans perishing from hunger and misery, in a worse plight than vile animals. This is all referred by Ignatius as taken from Procopius, and the whole is not free from suspicion. Our holy doctor, in the aforesaid epistle, says that they entered in by night, because although he is alluding to the words of Isaiah,[1] "*In the night Moab is laid waste, it is silent: because the wall of Moab is destroyed in the night*," yet he feels that in truth it did so happen, and in this way did the many eye-witnesses, who had come to him, recount the fact. Farther down he repeats it, when alluding to the words of Virgil, "*Who will sing to us about that sad night, and who will be able to tell us of so many deaths?*" Then the saint goes on to recount an event with regard to Marcella and her companion, Principia. "There entered some of the Gothic soldiers," he says, "into the humble house where the saintly and great matron, Marcella, had taken refuge along with Principia, and suspecting that beneath that poor apparel much wealth might be concealed, these soldiers began to scourge Marcella, whom they took to be the mother of the maiden, demanding that their wealth should be made known to them; and on her denying in truth that there was any, they multiplied their stripes, blows, and wounds. Meanwhile, the saint preserved a

[1] Isaiah xv. 1.

cheerful, serene countenance, and only besought them, with tears, not to take from her that virgin whom she had with her. The barbarians, although they were rough men, took pity on them; and, in order that others should not ill-treat them, took them both to the Church of St. Paul. The holy matron returned God thanks with great joy that the soldiers had neither touched the virgin Principia, nor had her own captivity rendered her poor, for of her own free will she had already parted with everything."

This entry into Rome took place according to some authors in the year 1164 from its foundation and 412 from our Redeemer, others say in 410, and others again in 413; but these discrepancies are of small moment, because some refer to the first time Alaric entered, others to the last. All agree that at the time the Consuls were Flavius, Varanus, and Tortulus. A singular episode is recounted by Orosius.[1] When the barbarians were seeking for prizes, effecting robberies, and sacking, one of the soldiers and a chief among them, who was a Christian, came to a house belonging to the Church, in which lived a maiden lady of advanced age and holy life. The Goth, with some show of respect, demanded her to give up the gold and riches she possessed. This woman, with the faith and spirit of a servant of God, replied that she held in her possession much wealth and of great esteem, and proceeded to conduct him to where she kept the treasure enclosed. The Goth was astonished to behold so much wealth, such a collection of exquisite vessels of gold and silver, without comprehending whence all this could have come and for what purpose. She then said to him, "Dost thou behold all this treasure and so many precious vessels? Well, you must know that these are all consecrated to the service of the Church of St. Peter.

[1] Oros. lib. 7, cap. 40; Blond. lib. 1, dec. 1; Kalen. *Ap. Vives in D.*; Aug. *De Civitate Dei*; Niceph., Procopius.

Now will you dare to touch them at your peril? I, forasmuch as I am unable to defend them, dare not keep them in my possession!" The barbarian was moved to fear and reverence, and touched inwardly with the spirit of religion, and full of the devotion and faith manifested by that saintly woman he sent word to have the case told to Alaric: he at once ordered that forthwith all this treasure, without loss of a single piece, should be taken to the Church of St. Peter, together with the maiden lady who guarded them, and that all the Christians who should wish to accompany this removal should be made free, and none should touch them, rather they were to be defended and taken in safety. The house of this holy virgin was a great distance from the Church of St. Peter, so much so that it was necessary to traverse nearly the whole city, but along all the distance did they carry this treasure of great wealth right through the soldiers and barbarians openly and publicly. Some of the vessels were carried in their hands, others on their heads, others again clasped in their arms, for by reason of their weight and size they could not be taken covered or better guarded, yet no one touched them, because this procession of men carrying these precious things was escorted and guarded by a strong squadron of Goths bearing naked swords. The Romans who witnessed so strange a spectacle were overcome with joy, and in the midst of their extreme sadness and calamity joined them in singing hymns and songs of gladness, Romans and Goths, until they placed the holy vessels in the safe custody of the owners. By this spectacle the infidels and the pagans who were in the city remained in great confusion, beholding so strange an effect of Christian faith in the midst of such fury and pillage—a thing altogether miraculous. Here Orosius notices, as being a pious man, that this occurrence was as it were a Divine disposition to save in such great straits the

faithful, while the Gentiles and false Christians were left to perish: because the good and the religious, as soon as they had cognisance of this event, came forth from their places of concealment, moved by faith and devotion, and by accompanying the sacred chalices and precious vessels were made free according to the warrants given out by the Supreme Captain, Alaric; while those of small faith and still more wretched morals remained concealed, where the sword of the enemy found them. And these vessels, Orosius says, were like the sieves and sifters, by which God separated the good from the bad.

This is in brief taken from Orosius, and he has full reason for taking note of this and enlarging on it. Because I know not that we, who pride ourselves upon being Christians, were we put to the proof, would manifest so much respect for St. Peter and St. Paul, or indeed for God. If there be any proof of this, our recent histories will show it. The Goths continued within the city for three days: they burnt down some of the buildings—a few, says Orosius, because those who bear in mind the number burnt down by the Emperor Nero and other similar monsters, who were reared within the Roman walls, simply for their own pleasure, seven hundred years from its foundation, and three hundred more or less before this entry in question, will have reason to see that there is no comparison. And those who recall to mind the fire which the French in other times kindled there, which fire continued to burn and its ashes never cooled for the best part of a year, will not be astonished at these few sparks; rather he will clearly see that this event was plainly a Divine chastisement, and to correct pride and ambition, the luxury and brutality of those who called themselves Christians, yet who were an affront to that holy name. And what buildings had escaped the hands of the conquering barbarians within the same

year were struck by lightning from heaven, and many set on fire. At this entry was taken captive Galla Placidia, the daughter, as we have already said, of the good Theodosius, and sister of Arcadius and Honorius. She married very soon after Athaulphus, brother-in-law of Alaric, which proved an event of great importance in the subsequent successful history. This was the first time that Gothic blood was mingled with Spanish and Roman. Here let the intelligent reader consider whether the attacks were superfluous or excessive which St. Jerome made when in Rome against the depraved morals of the priesthood, the monks, widows, and all classes of people; and whether he uttered truths in that controverted epistle of his, "On the Guard of Virginity," addressed to Eustochium. They would not receive the loving fatherly admonitions which God was sending through the voice of His servant Jerome; it was necessary that they should experience a heavy one from the mailed fist of the enemy. In return for the good done by Jerome they persecuted him and raised false testimonies against him until they forced him to quit the city, saddened, afflicted, scorned, and contemned; then let not Rome marvel, if the voice of the blood of her sins reached the Divine ears, and if upon her fell the merited scourging; and such as could not endure the presence of the saint when he reprehended them in their houses, come now seeking for him in their affliction, sad, poor, and themselves exiled, at the Cave of Bethlehem. Thus does the saint himself tell us in the course of his *Commentaries upon Ezechiel.* I believe that during the time when he was writing them, not only had these miseries passed over the sad city, but that even the last entry had taken place and the last destruction had been wrought there by Athaulphus. I infer this, because the holy matron Marcella died after all these sad events, as the saint himself writes in her funeral discourse. And, when he

commenced the *Commentaries*, Marcella was already dead, as we saw in the Preface of the First Book. Athaulphus was elected Emperor after the death of Alaric, four years after the entry into Rome, and according to others in the same year, and he reigned six years, at least he died in the year 416 or 417 after our Redeemer, according to Orosius. He himself mentions that being in Bethlehem with our glorious saint, he told him that he had had with him a soldier of Narbonne,[1] a principal and grave man, who had told him that Athaulphus had had a great desire to level Rome altogether to the ground, and build up another city, which in grandeur and majesty should altogether exceed it, and, burying the name of Rome, call it *Gotia* : and, just as that one would remain a second Rome in the world, so also should the name of Athaulphus enter in place of that of Cæsar and Augustus in the subsequent history of the empire. This intention and thought, so rude and barbarian, was removed from his mind by the prudence of Galla Placidia, who knew how to urge such good reasons to dissuade him from his intention, that she induced him to again lift up the grandeur and dignity of Rome. This was, as some affirm, after he had once robbed and despoiled her of all that remained after the first entries and sackings; and by the persuasion of Galla he did not touch individuals. Therefore it was after all these events and terrible occurrences that our doctor was occupied in writing his *Commentaries upon Ezechiel.* In the Preface to Book the Third he bewails this fall by saying : "No one thing is long if it has an end, and the long past course of events profits but little, had not a sufficient provision been made of good works by such as look into the future, and what is eternal, and under no circumstances do they withdraw. A true sentence is this: *All that is born dies ; and what is full grown grows old.*" And

[1] Blondus says he was of Barcelona.

in another place he says: "There is no one thing that is made by hands or art but which through age crumbles. Who would have thought that Rome should have had so great a fall, which had been built and ennobled with the spoils of the whole world, and that she herself should be both mother and sepulchre of her citizens, and that all the shores of Africa, the East, and Egypt should be peopled with the subjects and slaves of the city which was the Mistress of the World, and that daily in holy Bethlehem there should resort as poor mendicants the richest and the noblest of her citizens—men and women to which we are no longer able to afford the relief desired, yet sympathising with them, and mingling our tears with theirs? Hence occupied with the burthen of so holy a work, since we cannot witness the numbers who come to us without wailing and weeping, we have put aside the explanation of Ezechiel, and indeed all other studies, exchanging for works the words of holy writ, and *not speaking of holy things, but doing them.* But, as you importune us afresh, O holy virgin Eustochium, we recommence to prosecute the work already begun."

In this tender way, as we have seen, did our holy doctor feel the fall of Rome, and it was a great hindrance to his labours of commenting thus to have the thread of it interrupted by the care of so many poor, so many afflicted, seeking for them some solace and comfort, exercising works of great charity, and perchance, towards some from whom in former times he had received but little enough; for our Lord brings oftentimes such as these into the hands of the very ones they once formerly persecuted, for the good of both parties, so that the ones are exercised, and the others see and acknowledge the wrong done. It was to do this work that the saint laid down his pen. It seemed to him that the pressing wants of these poor ones were commended by God to his care at the present time not for future trials

which might follow, for He would provide in His time for the latter. Jerome knew well how to attend to all and to give each his proper meed of time, as the wisdom of Solomon teaches us in his *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiastes*, the present was the time for weeping and to show compassion, not for writing or for the enjoyment of calm meditation. In the Preface to Book the Seventh he says as follows: "I confess that very long ago I promised to write the *Explanation of Ezechiel*, but I have been unable to fulfil this promise, owing to the duty of attending to those who come from all parts of the world; because there is no hour or moment in which we have not to go forth to receive the companies and the squadrons of brothers and sisters; and the solitude of the monastery is exchanged for a continuous receiving of guests, to such a degree that either we must needs close the doors, or put aside the study of the sacred Scriptures: from which we learn how we have to open them. Therefore it comes to this—that only at short moments and during the hours we steal from the night (and with the approach of winter these hours are becoming lengthened) that we proceed with our dictating, such as it is, by candle-light. We do not say this to vaunt ourselves, as some think, for the hospitality we offer; but to confess simply the cause of our delay. More especially as the sudden departure of the western nations, and the stream of people who approach these holy places, the nakedness, the wounds, and the sores of these miserable people, well manifest the cruel fury of the barbarians. It is a sight we cannot view without shedding many tears and heaving sighs, when we behold and consider the former opulence and untold wealth of those who now are cast down in the depths of misery, so much so that they have neither home nor food, nor apparel: yet these things will not soften the hard-heartedness of some, for they still rather search

for their torn garments and wraps to seek gold amid captivity."

At length the saint concluded his *Commentaries* as best he could, and this labour took some years to effect, harassed as he was by so many occupations, and in my opinion this must have been about the year 420, as we shall investigate farther on. There happened to our saint another event, which caused him as great a grief as any of those he had experienced during his life. This was the death of the holy virgin Eustochium. This loss was to him in his extreme age a deeply felt one for many reasons. In her he lost a dear spiritual daughter, whom he had watched over from earliest infancy, leading so saintly a life. This loss came to him after so many sorrows, when death had deprived him of many dear friends, disciples, and confidants, leaving him alone, as it were, with no one to console or help him. Moreover, these monasteries remained bereft of their head—so many houses full of virgins from distant lands, who had resorted there; so many religious, who were supported by the industry of these holy sisters. We find no certain records of the date of her death, nor where it took place, nor the details. There was now no longer any one left in Rome to whom to write nor who would ask details of our saint. Only have we some brief words left to us, which certify her death, in an epistle written to St. Augustine, where he says as follows: "As regards whether I have written or replied respecting the books of Anianus, the false Deacon, I make known to you that our holy brother Eusebius, the Priest, forwarded to me the same in sheets, which I received not many days ago, since which, owing to the various ailments which have come upon me, and to the grief which so deeply has wounded me through the death of our holy and venerable daughter Eustochium, I have not as yet taken any notice of

them."[1] I hold it as certain that this holy virgin died before St. Jerome commenced the *Commentaries on Jeremias*, which was the last of the Prophets he commented on; and, if we notice the "Prologues upon Ezechiel" we shall see that he had promised these to the holy virgin, and, as in those of Jeremias he makes no mention of her in any of the prologues, it is evident that she was dead, and therefore that her death occurred during the period which elapsed between the conclusion of the *Commentaries on Ezechiel* and previous to commencing those upon Jeremias—a long lapse of time and silence, owing to his illness and grief at the death of the saintly woman.

This last work he dedicated to his beloved disciple Eusebius of Cremona, for no other object remained to him in life but him; and, as he makes no mention of his brother Paulinian, it makes me think that he also had died. Subsequently he wrote the "*Commentaries on the Lamentations of Jeremias*" during the last days of his old age, and as the close of his labours. Here he bewails with the holy Prophet not indeed the fall of the earthly Jerusalem, nor the captivity of Israel and Juda according to the flesh, but that of souls and the Christian people. In the Preface on these last Commentaries he again explains the Hebrew Alphabet, as we have already said.

After this, little can he have written beyond a few epistles and the funeral discourse on Fabiola and Marcella, and I even think that he wrote this previous to the Commentary. Therefore I will now bring to a conclusion the account of his saintly labours. About this time there arose again the reports of the coming of the barbarian Huns into the Holy Land; the rumour proving a fact, because they traversed it, and brought companies and squadrons, which spread devastation and ruin, for in their cruelty they spared

[1] *Epist.* 179.

no barbarian act, all being put to death, and burnt whom they came across ; indeed so great was their fury that the saint very nearly fell a prey into their hands. For thus does St. Jerome express it in the Epistle to Marcellinus, where he briefly touches upon the fact in these words :[1] "This year there came a sudden inroad of barbarians, and they scoured with great fury all the limits of Egypt, Palestine, Phœnicia, and Syria, so much so, that like a fearful torrent they carried all things before them, and it was only by the mercy of Christ that we were able to escape their hands ; and if, according to the famous orator, laws are silent amid the clangour of war, how much more so is this the case with the Studies of the Sacred Writings, a task which demands the reading of many books, great silence, and much safety and repose ?" This coming of the barbarians took place after the entry of Alaric into Rome, and before the saint concluded the *Commentaries on Ezechiel.* Many other things must remain untold, as it would be an infinite labour to attempt to write them all. Now there remains still to be written his glorious departure to a better world, but all details respecting his death we shall carefully handle, as there is not much light thrown upon it by the writers of that time.

[1] *Epist.* 82.

DISCOURSE THE THIRD

The Passing Away and Death of the glorious Doctor, St. Jerome.

It was full time that the great Father and holiest doctor of the Church, Jerome, should end the long day of his holy pilgrimage, and finish the course of a life so protracted and so divine. His frame, despite the weight of so many years, was not indeed bent, but spent, and no longer able to contain the soul; worn to a skeleton, thin, wasted, pale —a form of skin and bone—the exterior senses could scarcely exercise their office, but his interior ones supplied the deficiency. The vigour and virility of Jerome had entirely withdrawn to the heart; there indeed they were as vivid and whole as in his earlier days, but his physical strength no longer corresponded to the desire. It was a singular sight to behold his body, as it were, formed of knotted roots, held together and supported barely by two emaciated legs; nevertheless his breast was heaving with the burning desires and fervent yearnings for undertaking great and lofty things, while his spent powers were too weak to execute the smallest of them. His soul supplied all these defects; and such labours as—being more proper to it—he could execute without the body, were his support and his nourishment, and were carried out all the more perfectly because less hampered by the weight of earth. His advanced age had removed from

his fingers the possibility of writing, from his eyes sleep, and even sight, and, what he felt most, the power of reading, and nought remained to Jerome but his inseparable companion—prayer. This was his exercise, and what time and age could not take from him; this was the Sunamitess who kept the vital heat in the old man, as she held him in her arms by day and by night; all other means being repudiated as cold. The soul had withdrawn to its inmost recesses, all outward doors being closed, and in that secret retreat wrought the finest and most exquisite work of its office, which is the meditation on the sovereign truths, placed in the continual thought of heaven, already conversing with the divine citizens, forgetting all that appertains to here below, and thereby was already in the enjoyment of that sweet, exquisite Sabbath promised by God through Isaiah. Already had he been for a length of time transported; he scarcely understood what was said, indeed he did not seem to hear when he was addressed, listening within to that Voice from Heaven which was sounding in his ears as in the Apocalypse saying, "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.*" His spirit was already telling him in secret to rest from his labours, and repose from his fatigues. He saw himself enjoying so much good; he saw that the labours done with the assistance of the Divine Grace during the course of his life were now yielding delicious fruits; and through having placed them in so safe an exchange, were affording him high interest. He already comprehended by experience that Psalm which he himself in earlier days had expounded, "*Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it*"; that it is impossible to obtain by craft or force what is only bestowed by grace. All is resolved into falling down and mounting up; to rise early, and to sit up late, eating the bread of sorrow and of

labour, unless God sends the sweet sleep, that repose which He has in reserve for His beloved ones. Then indeed is the fulness attained. There indeed is abundance found; then do all riches come together of the inheritance of the Lord,—house, children, property, fruits, cattle, and an invincible strength against all the most powerful enemies who can range themselves to oppose the passage and entrance.

And furthermore he was likewise comprehending in the inner depths of his heart the meaning of the words of St. Paul when writing to the Hebrews[1] he told them of another seventh day for the people of God; because he who enters into the rest of Jesus Christ rests from his labours, like God from His works. In this seventh day did Jerome find himself placed; in this respite from labour and rest which eye never has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man to conceive, for he must indeed be more than man who could attain to it—no longer the old Adam, nor a form arrayed in apparel and dress, but a being despoiled of all that, a new man vested in Jesus Christ, who has passed through the narrow door, along the sharp crevice where the ancient serpent despoils itself of its old skin and comes forth with renewed skin, a child of God, a consort of the Divine Nature, a favour never merited.

Being in this most blissful state Jerome, yearning with his whole strength for these frail bonds to be broken and the knot cut asunder which bound the body and the soul together, since no other ties of sin remained, all having been consumed by his continual penance, burnt up by the fire of charity—there came over his emaciated limbs so extraordinary a heat, which seemed to burn to ashes his frame. Sigebert, in his Chronicle, affirms that he was so consumed by fasts, so weakened by penances, so

[1] Hebrews iv.

worn out by instruments of penance, that he was forced to lie full length on his poor bed, unable to raise himself up or stir unless by the aid of a rope which had been suspended from a beam over his bed. Conscious that this fever would inevitably take him to his desired repose, and that the end of his labours was near, and the Crown of Faith, having been kept and defended, was now close at hand, a great joy came over our beloved Jerome owing to the great desire of arriving to the desired haven. He broke out in loving cries full of devotion and ardent sentiments; at times he would exclaim, "I think I shall see the riches of the Lord in the land of the living, knowing full well that in the land of those who die they cannot be seen." At other times he would sing with David, "I rejoice at the good news that has come to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord. Blessed are those who dwell therein, for they will praise Him for all ages." Again, at other times he would cry, speaking with his sweet Jesus, and say, "My heart is ready, Lord, my heart is ready: I will sing psalms; I will cry, Glory be to the Lord!" Every moment seemed to him a day, each hour a year; time was slow in passing, and delay was prolonged. Yearning as he did for the realisation of his hopes he would exclaim in loving complaints: "Ah, woe is me! My exile is long; my soul lingers too long in this dwelling. I long to find myself unbound and delivered from this darksome prison-house, and to fly away to Jesus Christ. The wounded hart does not desire the cool waters so greatly as I desire Thee, Lord God, living and strong."

The fever was running its course: his disciple, Eusebius of Cremona, and his other spiritual sons and daughters fully realised that the end was coming. This they perceived not so much on account of the ardour manifested by Jerome as

in the joy which was reflected in the saint's countenance, like one who already finds himself close to the long-sought-for haven. Their hearts were struck icy cold, and they commenced to weep bitterly and to manifest deep signs of distress and grief, for it seemed to them almost unbearable to be deprived of so great a father, to be forsaken by such a captain, and to be left by so learned and dear a master. When they came into his presence they dissembled their grief, for they feared to give pain to the great doctor by manifesting deep feeling. They saw on one hand the good reason that existed for God to take this saint to his well-won rewards, to a well-earned rest, and to the award of a great prize for his well-sustained combats and victories; yet, on the other hand, they felt how great was their loss. They besought God in prayer for an unreasonable thing, yet to their advantage—that he should be left to them yet a few years longer, because though aged and consumed as he was, yet they loved him, for he was before them a living sermon, and his presence among them truly an open book: that when he should be gone, they would lack all things; they would become dispersed: that so costly an edifice would come to ruin, and that He should not permit in His mercy so many evils. This was the summary of their prayer; this the theme of their petitions.

Among the works of St. Jerome[1] there is found a letter of Eusebius of Cremona, the beloved disciple of St. Jerome, to Damasus, Bishop, and Theodosius, Senator of Rome, in which is narrated in detail the passing away and death of our great doctor. It is in my opinion, as well as of many other experts, a letter of no authority for many reasons. The first reason is, that it is unworthy of so noble an author, for it is written in a poor, low, coarse style, written by a common mind, and full of errors when quoting

[1] Apud Marian. t. 9; Apud Erasmus. t. 4.

Scripture and history, aping Eusebius, Cyril, Augustine, and even Jerome. He feigns to write to Damasus, Bishop of the Porto,[1] with whom he pretends the saint is very intimate, calling him "Lord and Father." If he pretends to be writing, as he evidently does, to St. Damasus, Pope, he could not betray greater ignorance, for it is a well-known fact that at the Epoch of St. Jerome's death some forty years had elapsed since the death of Pope Damasus, which occurred previous to St. Jerome quitting Rome, as can be verified by a hundred other proofs, and, as we have seen, after him was Siricius elected Pope, who governed the Church for more than fifteen years, after whom came Athanasius and then Innocent. To Innocent succeeded Zosimus, and at the time of Jerome's death Boniface I. was in the chair. There does not exist in all the writings of our holy doctor any mention of any other Damasus, neither letters nor a single word, yet the author assumes a great familiarity with him: moreover, in all the works of other writers of the time there are no records left to us of any such Damasus—I do not say Pope, but no Bishop of Porto—nor do we know what port he refers to but that of his own ignorance, where he resorted to to indite the said letter. And, furthermore, this feigned Eusebius declares that, when St. Jerome was at the point of death, he besought him to write to his father, Damasus, Bishop of Porto, and commend him to his prayer, and beseech him not to allow his works to be corrupted by the heretics, his enemies, and to guard carefully the Church. Whence it is seen that this good man meant St. Damasus, Pope. Farther on he confirms this, where he calls St. Jerome *Counsellor of the said Damasus and his adviser and familiar in grave questions*, and quotes some well-known passages in the letters of Damasus and Jerome.

[1] Porto, near Rome and Ostia, one of the ancient ports of Rome.

Putting aside all further quotation as being a feigned and false thing, and not in reason to be believed or taken any notice of, yet, nevertheless, I dare to affirm that he had near him something of Eusebius of Cremona, which afforded him the occasion of writing this letter, because, if we consider the writing and examine some of the statements, there is a great similarity, and reasonably so. Moreover, there are parts which are readable, and are interesting and probable. Among other things he says that the couch whereon the saint reposed was surrounded by his monks and his spiritual children, whom he had nurtured with his doctrine, who were all sorrowing and in tears at his sad state. St. Jerome spoke consoling words to them, grave, holy, affectionate and efficacious, exhorting them to perseverance in virtue, and in the purpose of life they had commenced, since they were so sure of the Crown. He set before them the shortness of life, how that neither labour nor contentment lasted long, and that even what does seem long has its end: but the reward is endless, the measure full and running over. He besought them earnestly not to lose heart in the time of persecution, nor faint away in the direst straits and encounters. He repeated to them the words of the psalm, "Expect the Lord, do manfully, comfort and strengthen the heart: wait and endure for the Lord until He comes." He raised their fallen spirits to this confidence by words and examples which, as his last utterances, were inflamed with great love, and thus remained more fully impressed on the memory. He bade them not grieve at his absence, that they had not come there on his behalf, but at the voice of Divine trust, which never is absent or dies: for He is the true Succour, Father, Helper, and Pastor; and so long as they possess Him naught is wanting to them. That a man may disappoint another fellow-man is a small deficiency,

for God supplies the want, and even with a most bountiful hand.

After the death of Moses, who had brought out of Egypt the Children of Israel, there succeeded Joshua, who led them into the promised land. When Elias was ravished up in the chariot of fire, who was a man of zeal and stern, there remained in his place Eliseus with a doubled spirit: and even should all fail, out of the very stones He knows how to draw forth sons of Abraham. Let them on their part endeavour to preserve union, charity, and peace as they had done up to then, that it was by these things that they should make manifest not indeed that they were his disciples, but disciples of Jesus Christ, true imitators of the Apostolic School, of which it was said, as the height of excellence and perfection, that they had one soul and one heart in God: a proper mark of the Evangelical law, to which the Mosaic law never reached, and it is in this that the actual difference exists, that this was the aim which God had in view when He came to the world, to establish this unity among men, thereby making of two peoples one, and the ox and the ass to worship at the crib, both to wear the same yoke, reconciled among themselves with the angels and with God.

After saying these words, and others of equal and even greater weight, feeling that his last hour was approaching, he asked that the most Holy Body of Christ should be brought to him. When the blessed Sacrament was brought and placed before him he strove to rise up as well as he could in his great weakness, by the force of his fervour, and attempted to kneel and adore Him, shedding copious tears which seemed almost impossible could come forth from so emaciated a frame. He addressed to It loving, tender words and such deep soliloquies only comprehended by Jerome and his God. He called It his Spouse sweet and

loving, concealed behind that thin veil which was like the tent beneath which the Mystic Union was celebrated in so grand a Sacrament, and which the vessel of election is in astonishment contemplating what is hidden within—a secret kept from all the angels, the devils, and from men since the forming of the world, yet revealed in the evening of the world, and learned from the Church, and in her made known to all the highest potentates and princes. The terror of hell, the fall of the Kingdom of Satan, where he lost his right, where he found himself cast forth from the world, banished from his principality, vanquished by his own wisdom, captive in his own fetters, an irremediable fall, the great victory of God, key to His monarchy, the royal title of His empire. At times, when St. Jerome contemplated the great Love which he had before him, his countenance would become lighted up with joy : to be succeeded after a few moments, when he considered the great Majesty of God, by a reverential tremour. Great indeed had been the respect which this saint felt the whole of his life towards this ineffable mystery, since, as we have seen, he held himself unworthy to exercise the high office of the priesthood ; and in this same fear had he indoctrinated his brother Paulinian and as many as resorted to him. Now he holds Him in his hands at this crisis of his life, combated by love and fear, not indeed servile, but filial, and by a great reverence, these two strong passions wrestling within him, each striving to take possession of all that was best of his soul. At length he parted his lips and received that glorious Food, that Bread of eternal life, and then there came over his countenance an admirable light, full of celestial bliss.

Jerome embraced his spiritual sons, and, bestowing upon them his blessing and peace, he bade them farewell. From this moment he spoke no more, and withdrawing his mind interiorly like to one who was already in glory, his soul re-

mained absorbed with all its powers to do homage to the great Prince, Whom he had received in his house. He remained in this rapture for a long while without any outward movement, and, when the sacramental species were being consumed, before the Corporeal Presence of Jesus Christ had disappeared, he made so great and superhuman an effort to join and embrace his Spouse and last End that all action and power were suspended even to the beating of his heart; his weakness, however, was too great for him to be able to withstand the effort he was making to lift himself up in this rapture and ecstasy, so that the bonds of life were severed and his soul, delivered of its earthly coil, flew like a pure dove to the eternal mansions.

At that juncture, or a little before, the cell became filled with an extraordinary light; and as it were a mist or veil of resplendency suffused the countenance of that glorious face, dazzling the eyes of those who were around him, so much so that no human eye beheld when the last breath of life was drawn. Then was heard rising up a murmur of joyous admiration and of weeping from those who were present, sprung spontaneously rather from a feeling of consolation at witnessing so saintly a spectacle as that last scene, while tears and wailing followed in grief and sorrow at his departure. Testament and inheritance were none. Yet in truth it was very great: that holy place acquired for the possession of his sons, that Crib and that Cave were the inheritance Jerome bequeathed to his monks. Never did earthly prince endowed with the wealth of the world ever leave such an estate as an inheritance for his successors. It was there where Jerome had laid out his heritage, and as such it became the Mortuary Chapel for his remains. He had directed that his body be buried in the Cave of the Crib, and be laid close to the Manger—a thing no man in the world had merited.

In this manner did the great Jerome pass from this life to the life of heaven: he who was the terror of heretics and of bad Christians, the consoler of the pious and the good, the joy of some and the sorrow of others—some because they do not see their own evil, and others because they do not comprehend their own advantage. The saints do not die when to our eyes they seem to die: rather to the contrary they enter into eternal life—a life which has no fear of death; a secure possession, exchanging little for much, for they enter into the joy of their Lord. They come in to be lords and princes who up to that moment laboured like good artisans and faithful servants, putting their talents to interest. Of the saints holy Scripture oftentimes declares that they die full of years in a good old age; wishing to signify by this that there was in them nothing empty, nor in death anything ignominious, nor in their old age anything that was frail, but that, when they reached the termination of their course, all was full and completed. They died in a full integrity, for so does the word *full* imply, and with the addition *of days* this means *integrity of light, perfection of charity and ardour;* and thus does David prophesy when he sings,[1] "*Full days shall be found in them,*" not because they are of longer life than evil and perverse men, for these we often find exceed the good, but because they attain to see the fulfilment of their desires, the fruit of their works in abundance, their labours converted into glory, and that at length they attain what they sought after, since indeed for these things is length of life granted. The wicked, to the contrary, will have, as it has been sworn, no remission of days. These two words *full* and *measure* carry with them their opposites, hence, although we may exceed in life the age of the crow, and be more aged than Nestor, we can never attain the fulfilment of our disorderly appetites nor behold

[1] Psalm lxxii. 10.

the crown of our desires and schemes. Our Jerome now beholds all things fulfilled: now does he enjoy all that his soul so greatly desired, and finds himself in that most happy port, to which he had directed the course of his ship with unfurled sails.

After the saintly King David had left disposed and distributed the wealth for the expenses of the building of the Temple, the gold, silver, and the many other metals necessary for the erection of the House wherein God was to dwell, he ordered the music of singers and minstrels for the Royal Palace of the Majesty Divine, having received the outlines and plans from heaven and delivered them to his son Solomon, assessing the plans and the outlines; and, after having vanquished his enemies and established a great peace among the people of Israel, the holy Scriptures say of him,[1] that he died at a good old age, full of days, of riches, and of glory. And similarly may we say the same of our saint now, that after he had enriched the Church by the gold and silver of his writings, full of wisdom and eloquence, and discovered the treasures of the holy Scriptures, drawing them forth from the depths of the Hebrew tongue and the Chaldean with his admirable translations: after he afforded us so great a knowledge of recondite mysteries, and had ordained and set the various offices of the Church, with sketches and plans, which had come down from heaven for the beautifying of so grand a Temple, arranging the chants and the harmony of the Divine Worship, setting in order and good style all that we find in it beautiful and admirable: after he had hurled down so many heretics, the capital enemies of the Church, and confounded so many Jewish persecutors of Christ, and left such a wealth for those who should take advantage of it, and continue the construction—full of days and of glory, at a good old age, full of riches,

[1] 1 Paralip. xxiii. usq. in finem.

his soul flew to the life that was eternal, from whence he beholds and enjoys the original of his translations, contemplating face to face what he had known in figures and enigmas. It is not easy to find one with whom we could compare so great a Father. We may well say of him that he is in the Church what Beseleel was in the ancient tabernacle, of whom Holy Scripture tells us that God called him by his name, which is to say, that he chose him from out all the sons of Israel, and his name signifies this, for in our tongue it sounds Besleel, in the *shadow of the strong*:[1] in order that we should understand that He filled him with His breath and gave him science for all that he should have to construct. Hence the same text goes on to say that God filled him with His spirit, with wisdom, understanding, prudence, skill, and knowledge, in order that, invested with so many gifts, he should be a general master in all that construction, devise and dispose what should be needed in gold, silver, and brass, iron, wood, silk, linen, and wool; in all these works he had a hand, for all things he had sufficient wealth; to all did he apportion work, and taught what had to be done: he was master general of that Fabric of God, the original of which the same God Himself taught to Moses on the Mount, although not given to them at the time, but reserved for these happy times of the Gospel, since they were no more than the figure and outline. All this is a vivid picture of what occurred in the case of Jerome. There is no one thing in this great tabernacle (which was planted by the hand of God and not by that of man), as St. Paul says when alluding to this, in which St. Jerome was not a Beseleel. God called him by his name; He separated him and chose him from a thousand peoples, and, as we said in the commencement of this work, by his name God signified all this to us that we have seen during the course of his

[1] Exod. xxxi. and xxxv.

life. He filled him with His spirit. He gave him eloquence, skill, gift of tongues, wisdom, and he placed his hand in all the various works which were to be done in the House of God, whether of gold or silver or any other metal: in all things he took a hand; in all things was he the master, head, and architect. What is there appertaining to wisdom (which is fine gold) in the Church but what was worked by Jerome? What is there in the fine art of good diction of which he was not a master? What brass, what iron, or what metal, however hard of evil dogmas, or things not properly defined or understood, which he did not overcome, expound, and reform? What colouring, or what fine tints; what silk of delicate virtues; what webs or what fabrics have been woven of disputes and treatises, in which he was not first? The fine gold threads of virginity, who has ever drawn them out and spun them with greater skill? The silver of widowed continence, who has chiselled it better? The copper and the tin of matrimony, who knew how to polish and give it lustre better than Jerome? And the iron of the penitent, who wrought it better? What virtue was there which was not perceived in him and brought out in his writings by the fine colour of his ink? What patience in labours, persecutions, infirmities, and in false testimonies! What profound humility in the midst of so much praise and applause! Whilst every one was lifting him up above their heads he was placing himself at the feet of all, even of the lowest, washing and kissing them! What obedience to prelates, what reverence for elders, what respect and subjection to the Church! What temperance, what justice, rectitude and constancy! Yet never did he bend down or turn away, or lose an atom of his steadfastness in virtue. What sublime prayer, what deep meditation, what exalted ecstasy and rapture did he enjoy until he was raised to find himself amid the celestial choirs! How great

his poverty and detachment, and above all, how pure was his faith, how lively his hope, how steadfast his charity, how ardent and wide-spread! Go and be with God, glorious soul! Go, and enjoy, O divine Beseleel, the reward of your labours! Enter, and dwell not in the porch but in the interior of the Palace of the Tabernacle and Temple of the living God, there to dwell for ever! There indeed the angels will praise you! Here below we have only assumed to draw a sketch of your noble deeds, for, whereas in this life you never sought to win the glory of men, the Lord whom you served will laud you (as He has promised) before His Father. The Roman Breviary, which the whole Church has with so much justice adopted as the legitimate offspring of this glorious Father, affirms in the lessons which are read on the feast of this saintly doctor that he died illustrious in sanctity and in miracles. This confirms what the above quoted letter on his departure and death says: "Therein are related many marvels, and though some of them may appear not altogether in reason, of others we cannot possibly have any doubt." Who can doubt but that our Lord would work many miracles through the intercession of His great servant Jerome? God works these miracles for two ends—in order to impart authority to doctrine and give it force, and to the end that the people should respect and reverence the minister. This did He promise in the last words He uttered to his apostles, when speaking to them. He was taken up, as will be found in St. Mark, that signs should follow in confirmation of their words and doctrine. As the excellent Jerome passed away from this life on the last day of September at the hour of compline (thus both suns setting together), his soul rose to the Palace of Heaven, while his earthly remains were brought to the Church of the Crib, the first dwelling-place of the God Incarnate. A sweet fragrance was diffused around, and during the night a large

number of the servants of God, monks, and religious of various nations and countries who had already gathered in Bethlehem at the news and report of his illness, watched and prayed, singing without ceasing what they had learned from him. There resounded throughout the building a murmur of divers choirs, confused and devotional. Some sang in Hebrew, others in Syriac, others again in Arabic, in Latin, and in Greek, as well as in many other strange languages: indeed that church was like Mount Sion, where the Holy Ghost distributed the gift of languages, although it were only the dead man who could of himself have given the responses in all these tongues. When morning broke, all joined together and celebrated the most solemn requiem, and then they took the saintly body and laid it in the spot which he himself had chosen and given orders he should be laid, the spot his soul had desired in life, and in death he did not wish to quit that holy crib where he had experienced the delightful joys of contemplation. At the actual moment of placing the body in its grave, a person born blind received his sight by merely touching the body. A youth who was deaf and dumb, on kissing the saint's feet found himself freed from both these impediments. Out of the bodies of some who were possessed came forth evil spirits howling, and complaining of the violence that Jerome was exercising in casting them out; and in truth they had no reason of complaint, since they ought to have borne in mind that they themselves had laboured hard to drive him out of the desert and out of Rome, and they even strove to turn him out of Bethlehem, although this was not permitted them, and it was now full time that he should repay them and be himself the one to cast them out of the dwellings so unjustly possessed. Many other marvels, and miracles without number, it is said did God perform through His great servant Jerome in those early

days. It has been observed in many cases that the devils are in great fear of him, and to such an extreme that they dare not enter into dwellings or places where his image or picture is kept. This fact is so universally admitted that few saints have their images or pictures so frequently seen as that of St. Jerome, because it is held as certain that it is one of the most powerful means against the attacks and violence of the evil spirits, and other equally evilly disposed men and women whom the devil employs as his ministers to work evil. Furthermore, as he was so celebrated for his penance, Christians delight to have his image before them to spur them on to imitate him and follow his example.

It remains now to us, at the end of this history, to ascertain, if possible, the date of the death of the saint, and at what age he passed into eternity. Among grave authors it is the general opinion that his death took place in the year 420 of our Redeemer, when Theodosius II. was Emperor in the East, in the ninth year of his consulship, and the third of that of Constantine, and that he died at the age of ninety-one. In this they follow St. Prosper, who states this in his *Chronicle*, and, forasmuch as he is a very grave author, and a contemporary, great credit should be given him; moreover, the renown in which St. Jerome was held was so great that his death must have made that year memorable and noteworthy. This agrees with what I am about to state here, and with what I have observed in St. Augustine and in other authors. When Paul Orosius was with our glorious doctor in Bethlehem, having been sent by St. Augustine to discuss with him the doubts that had arisen in respect to the origin of souls, when Rome had been entered not only by Alaric, but even by Adolphus who succeeded him; and after this king had been in Rome, and from thence had sped through Italy and

part of France as far as Narbonne, where he dwelt for some time; and after the conferences and interviews held by St. Jerome with Orosius (as we have stated already), it is proved that Adolphus had already met his death at the hands of his soldiers—that, at least, all these events must have happened about the year 417 of our Redeemer. At this date St. Zosimus had been Pope, and I believe Boniface also. When St. Augustine sent Orosius he had come to Cesarea in Mauritania by mandate of the said Zosimus, where the Council was celebrated which is called the sixth Carthaginian, not because it was celebrated in Carthage, but because Cesarea was under that metropolis and in that province. It had commenced in the time of Innocent, and was against Pelagius, and was continued during the pontificates of Zosimus and Boniface, which by all accounts was about the year 418 or 419, and Boniface died in 423. The words of St. Augustine[1] in the Epistle to Optatus of Milevis (after he states that he was writing from Cesarea in Mauritania, where he had come by the orders of Pope Zosimus) are as follows: "Whereas a great friend of mine (this is understood of Count Marcellinus) had asked what were my sentiments in regard to the question of souls, I freely confessed to him my ignorance and the doubts I had in that respect; he then was minded to write to a very learned man, who dwelt beyond seas, and he replied referring him to me. This he said because he was not aware that he had already asked me. Taking advantage of this opportunity I wrote to him a by no means small book asking and beseeching him to teach me first, and then send me out to those I was to teach. This book which I wrote was not as though I was the teacher, but one who is a learner and wishes to acquire knowledge. When it comes back to hand, you may read it, but not

[1] August, *Epist.* 46.

make public, until it may please God I should receive an answer, and whatever that doctor may judge right I am quite ready prepared to defend."

Most singular is this trust evinced by St. Augustine for the opinions of St. Jerome, the authority with which he invests all the acts of his life. Farther on he adds: "Until either he replies to me, or I, if it so pleases God, should attain to learn more, I will not dare to preach or affirm anything." And farther on still he again declares that Pope Zosimus had already condemned by his letters the heresy of Pelagius and Celestius. Zosimus lived but three years, and then succeeded Boniface, from 421 or 422, according to some accounts. That Paul Orosius was the messenger sent by St. Augustine appears evident from Epistle 45 which he wrote to St. Jerome; which epistle, owing to its length, he styles *book*, where he puts the same words which we said he had written to Optatus. At the beginning of this epistle he says: "Although you are of greater age than I am, nevertheless, despite that I am aged myself, I ask of you counsel, because I consider that no age is too advanced for learning what I have need of, for though to those aged it be more becoming in them to teach than to learn, yet it is better in the end to learn than to remain ignorant as to what has to be taught." Then he goes on to say that when he was conceiving a great desire of writing and communicating with him, there came to him a young man, a Spaniard, a religious man of lofty intelligence, ordained priest, who was called Orosius, and that it seemed to him he had been sent by Heaven in order to be despatched to Bethlehem both to learn from St. Jerome what he was in search of, as well as by means of him to visit him and communicate his doubts, and take to him the epistle we have spoken of. Farther on he refers to the epistle written by Marcellinus to Jerome, and what

he had replied. Here St. Augustine calls himself old, because, according to what is gathered from his own words in his book *De Vita beata*,[1] he was born in the year 355, and, according to Posidonius in his life of the saint, he lived seventy-six years.

And whereas this embassy of Orosius took place after the death of Adolphus, and in the time of Zosimus, about the year 417, St. Augustine must then have been seventy-two years of age, and our saint some twenty years older, or thereabouts. Paul Orosius returned with his reply to Africa, as St. Augustine mentions[2] in Book II. of his *Retractations*, and this reply (to say it in passing) was to praise the genius of St. Augustine and to tell him that owing to the great occupations he had (I believe in ministering to the poor Romans, who were resorting to him) he could not reply to him very extensively. Orosius concluded his *Hormesta mundi* when with St. Augustine, and he reached the times of the Gothic King Walia, and, according to his account, which is that of the Septuagint, the year of creation 5618, and of our Redeemer 419 or 420, which all fits in very well, although the reckoning is not so exact as might be wished. Possibly our saint may have lived, at most, after all these events a few days, and however much we may endeavour to extend the time, it could only be up to the year 421 or 422. Having investigated this, and admitting the good reasons and conjectures advanced, and the authority of such ancient and grave authors, it becomes very difficult to reconcile what St. Prosper himself says, that, when the glorious saint died, he was ninety-one years of age. This is affirmed by nearly all who treat of his life, and they even go beyond that age. Bede, Sigebert, Paul deacon, and the Roman Martyrology declare that he was aged ninety-eight,

[1] August. *De Vita beata*; Posid., in fin. *Vitæ August.*

[2] August. *Retract.* 2, cap. 43.

and even ninety-nine. Accordingly, we must perforce say that he was born in the time of Constantine, as we found at the beginning of this history was said by these authors, some in the year 15, others in that of 20, others again in the thirtieth of his empire, but which we proved were false from the words of the self-same doctor, who said that when a boy and learning grammar there came to Rome news of the death of Julian the Apostate, from which we inferred that he must have been fifteen or sixteen years of age, and, as all agree that Julian died in 363, St. Jerome was born in the year 346 or 347 at best, and thus as to the year 422 there only intervenes seventy-six years; hence it is manifest that we must needs deduct at least fourteen years from the age all ascribe to him he had attained, which is indeed a great difference: and if it be an error, it is a great error, and does not seem to agree with the statement St. Augustine makes of the saint's great age, and with what all imagine him to have reached, and even with what the saint himself depicts in many passages of his works. In order to correct the discrepancy of years and settle the difficulty it appears to me that the solution given by a modern author when investigating this question is very trite. He says very properly[1] that when Julian died St. Jerome must have been twenty and not fifteen years of age, and not a boy, as his words would seem to imply: because the saint in his writings at times employs figures and manners of speech which are called amplification and attenuation, and of these he employs many when he in his old age refers to what he did in his youth; thus when he said he was a boy and studied grammar at the time when the news came of the death of the Cesar, it was attenuation, calling himself a boy, although he was twenty, which is a usual manner of old men, and thus means by grammar the human

[1] Baronius, t. 4, annal 6, Damasi, papæ.

sciences, dialectics, rhetoric, the Greek tongue, and other studies, which at the time he was pursuing. And so that it be not thought that he spoke at random, or superficially, he brings forward many passages, where he expresses himself in similar phrases.[1] Writing to Nepotian he says thus: "When I was a youth, or rather a boy, and repressed the impulses of that wanton age by the hard life of the desert, I wrote an epistle to your uncle, Heliodorus." Whence it is seen that he refers to writing an epistle when in the desert, being then thirty years of age, yet he calls himself a boy. In the *Commentaries on Isaiah*, referring to the great earthquake, which occurred in the times of Valentinian and Valens, about the year 365, he says of himself[2] that he was an infant, and at the very least he was sixteen or seventeen years of age. Oftentimes does St. Jerome call himself infant and boy speaking figuratively, or to signify how little in his estimation he had acquired, or the imperfections of things learned. Thus also does he call himself "a boy," and "small one," when he wrote the *Commentaries on Abdias*,[3] yet he was over thirty then; and similarly does he call himself a boy, when he was studying rhetoric and exercised himself in declamation and other studies of dialectics and philosophy; and until the time when being in the desert he commenced his studies of the Hebrew language he speaks of himself as a lad, because all had been given up for the study of Cicero, Pliny, Fronto, Aristotle, and Plato, alluding slily to the proverb of the Egyptians, *Græci semper pueri*, because they did not rise to the knowledge of things divine, and were for ever studying the elements of the world and polished speech, which are all boyish things. Hence it is seen that, although he may style himself a boy, and declare he was studying grammar when Julian died, it does not thereby prejudice the fact

[1] *Epist.* 2. [2] Super., cap. 15 *Isaiæ*. [3] *Epist.* 4 and 120.

that he might be at least twenty or thirty years old. This is in truth a very good conjecture and conclusion to come to, and the best that can be given, because it is so clear, for the reasons already stated, that he did not live beyond the year 422, we must put his birth at the year 341, and therefore he died at the age of eighty-one years, which is as far as it can be extended. This age of eighty-one years is the last of the climacterics composed of nine nines, and in this year our glorious Father and great doctor of the Church passed from the last step or rung of the ladder of nines to join the nine choirs of angels, where he will for ever praise with them the most Blessed Trinity, intoning in heaven that verse which he himself taught us to sing upon earth: *Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum.*—Amen.

THE END

LAUS DEO SEMPER

Printed by R. & R. Clark, Limited, *Edinburgh.*